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ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING, CONTRACTING & DEVELOPING
December 2025

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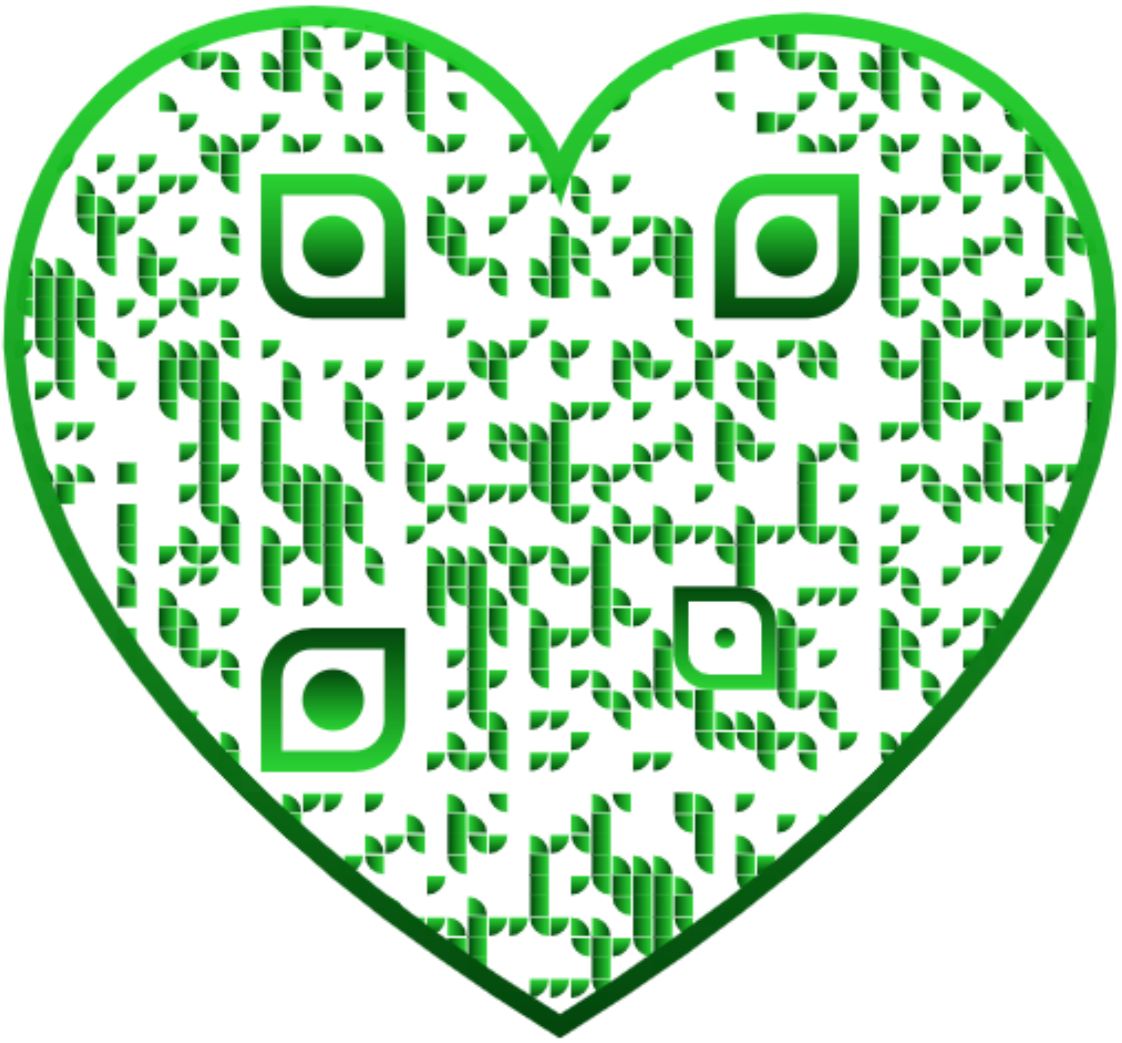
Myson discusses the energy saving benefits of renovating heating systems – P14



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Later life living – turning a corner for investors?

on the cover

Sustainable indoor heating and cooling solutions provider, **Myson**, discusses the energy saving benefits of renovating heating systems, revealing that savings of up to 30% can be achieved.

The company offers a wide range of products suitable for low temperature heating systems, including vertical and horizontal panel radiators, designer radiators, fan-assisted radiators, intelligent fan convectors, underfloor heating, towel warmers and space saving plinth heaters.

See page 14 for further details.

welcome...

...to the December issue of ABC&D magazine...

Cutting-edge timber engineering is the star of the show in this month's project feature on page 04. Fusing sustainable architecture with educational innovation, the new Design, Technology & Engineering building at Stowe School in Buckingham redefines how a structure itself can actively support curriculum delivery. The DTE building celebrates construction transparency through purposefully exposed structural elements, enabling students to observe and explore the inner workings of the building.

December's Hot Topic looks at how the specification of cladding solutions can help address labour shortages further down the development chain on page 16; Bobby Hall sets out the requirements of meeting Awaab's Law on page 20; Main Contractor ACT, in collaboration with SB Joinery, explore how today's renovation projects reinterpret traditional British craftsmanship for contemporary living on page 24; and on page 30, Steve Goodburn examines how every component within a fire door system works together and why compliance relies on treating the fire door as a composite system.

Anna Maclean looks at how early-stage sustainability integration saves cost and risk downstream on page 34; Woody's Concrete Company explains why initial collaboration between architect, contractor and specialist matters when specifying polished concrete floors on page 38; and on page 46, Daniel Austin asks whether later life living provision is turning a corner for investors.

...wishing our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, from all at ABC&D...

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revolutionary education building actively supports *curriculum delivery*

Education and construction are converging in bold new ways, with sustainable architecture increasingly being used as an extension of the curriculum itself. At Stowe School in Buckingham, this vision has been brought to life with the completion of a new £5.9m Design, Technology & Engineering (DTE) building, an award-winning project that seamlessly fuses cutting-edge timber engineering from ***B&K Hybrid Solutions*** *with educational innovation. The project is explored here in full detail...*

B&K Hybrid Solutions (BKHS) has played a pivotal role in the delivery of a new Design, Technology & Engineering (DTE) building at Stowe School – an inspiring and sustainable educational facility located within the historic, Grade I-listed grounds of Stowe House in Buckingham. Designed to support advanced robotics, manufacturing, and engineering education, the £5.9m project is redefining how a building itself can actively support curriculum delivery.

On behalf of Beard Construction, BKHS was selected to deliver an innovative timber solution, combining 108.237m^3 of glulam beams, 2,042m^2 of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) panels, and 46 tonnes of ground-floor steel grillage. The expert project team included architect Design Engine, structural engineer Buro Happold, specialist timber engineer Engenuiti, and CLT manufacturer Stora Enso. The collaborative result is a visually expressive, low-carbon, two-storey facility that functions not only as a high-quality learning space but also as a living laboratory; with visual elements allowing students to explore and engage with the building's engineering principles first-hand.

Aligning with Stowe's vision to become a leader in STEM education, the DTE building celebrates construction transparency. Exposed CLT and glulam structural elements are left purposefully exposed and visible throughout, with mechanical and electrical systems (including ductwork, pipework and cabling) colour-coded and surface-mounted, enabling students to observe and explore the inner workings of the building. The highly aesthetic quality of visual-grade timber, afforded by precision manufacturing, has been embraced as part of a broader biophilic approach that elevates both the learning environment and student wellbeing. The exposed elements left no margin for error, meaning that detailing, fabrication, installation sequencing and coordination had to be rigorously

With this facility, Stowe is now firmly positioned as the 'go-to' destination for future engineers, designers, and architects...

Martin Quinn
Head of Design & Technology
Stowe School

aligned and precisely executed.

Lee Roberts, Pre-Construction Director at BKHS, said: "We are delighted to have delivered Stowe School's new DTE building in collaboration with our project partners. Every detail, from structural timber connections to sequencing logistics, was carefully considered to meet the highest environmental and aesthetic aspirations for the client. BKHS and Beard Construction worked closely to minimise disruption for staff and students and align with school term times. All components were delivered to site via dedicated routes to help protect sensitive infrastructure within the grounds while streamlining the overall construction phase."

Precision was critical to the project's success. For the timber elements, a frozen IFC model ensured that all service penetrations were pre-cut to millimetre tolerances in the factory, improving installation accuracy while reducing material waste. Each element was coordinated for sequential delivery and erected quickly via designated access routes.

Environmental performance was a guiding principle throughout the design stages, and the building was conceived with its entire lifecycle in mind.

At RIBA Stage 2, Buro Happold assessed four structural options and identified that an all-timber solution would reduce embodied carbon by approximately 75% compared to a concrete-based frame. In total, the 476m^3 of PEFC-certified timber delivered for the project ultimately sequestered 360 tonnes of CO_2e, and through sustainable harvesting and responsible management of European forests, the timber will have been replaced by new growth in just 1 minute and 44 seconds. The structural timber elements are also fully demountable, supported by helical steel screw piles and dry screed systems, which allow the building to be dismantled at end of life or reconfigured as the school's educational needs evolve.

Alex Brock, Pre-Construction Manager at BKHS, said: "Timber is increasingly shaping the future of educational environments, not just for its sustainable credentials, but for the way it actively enhances the learning experience. At Stowe School's new DTE building, the exposed glulam and CLT structure doesn't just support the building, it supports the curriculum, turning the space itself into an interactive educational tool. This kind of transparent construction invites curiosity, encourages engagement with engineering principles, and fosters wellbeing through natural materials. It's a compelling example of how timber can deliver high-performance, low-carbon solutions that educate and inspire. The building was also acknowledged at the Offsite Awards 2025, winning Education Project of the Year."

As a flagship facility for the school, the DTE building has already received enthusiastic feedback from staff and students alike. Martin Quinn, Head of Design & Technology at Stowe School, said: "The new DTE building has transformed the way our students learn. The workshops are brighter, more vibrant, and provide an inspiring space where students can create and showcase their work. With this facility, Stowe is now firmly positioned as the 'go-to' destination for future engineers, designers, and architects."

Stowe School's new DTE building sets a precedent for low-carbon, educational architecture – where timber technology, offsite manufacture and circular economy principles have combined to shape not only the building's design, but its function as an evolving educational tool. The building also stands as a landmark achievement in educational architecture, showing how precision-engineered timber can deliver far more than a structural framework.

It is a building designed to teach as much as it accommodates, offering students first-hand exposure to engineering and sustainability principles through its visible, low-carbon design. By combining aesthetic quality with environmental performance and long-term adaptability, BKHS has helped Stowe School realise a facility that embodies the future of STEM education while respecting its historic setting. As a result, this project is not only a showcase of modern timber technology, but also a benchmark for how educational environments can actively inspire, engage, and prepare the next generation of innovators.

JT2

Ongoing benefits of technical support shown by Wraptite® installation at new Dumfries High School

Specialist contractors working on a new high school in Dumfries have shown the ongoing benefits of technical and learning support when it comes to delivering low energy construction. Having already used the **A. Proctor Group's** external air barrier, Wraptite, on a previous project, they have now applied that experience to another LEIP-funded school project.

Dumfries High School is a replacement school currently under construction. It is the second phase of a three-phase project, with an all-weather sports pitch already completed. When it is occupied in 2026, the £53m project will serve over 900 pupils, as well as providing community facilities.

Phase 2 of the Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) featured 25 projects, of which Dumfries High School was one. Thanks to the inclusion of energy efficiency measures in the building fabric, plus low energy M&E systems, the project is aiming for a LEIP band A energy target.

As a self-adhesive membrane that is both airtight and vapour permeable, Wraptite is designed to contribute to precisely this kind of building performance and fabric specification. Although Dumfries High School is not targeting Passivhaus certification, Wraptite's credentials are boosted by its status as a Passivhaus-certified component.

Installed to the outside face of external walls, Wraptite helps to achieve higher standards of airtightness by simplifying detailing and reducing the number of penetrations. At the same time, its vapour permeability allows the passage of moisture vapour out of the structure, avoiding any increase in condensation risk.

The Wraptite membrane at Dumfries High School was the responsibility of specialist contractors Cairnhill Structures, as part of designing, supplying and installing the complete structural framing system and other associated works.

Cairnhill Structures had previously used Wraptite on another school project. "We installed it on the Monifieth Learning Campus project," said Carlos Simoes, Contracts Manager - Framing at Cairnhill Structures. "As part of that project, we arranged an installation and training workshop at our factory in Coatbridge with Linda Kay and Lewis Stanley."

Training delivered for one project carries over to all subsequent projects, which is a significant benefit when looking to deliver consistent quality and achieve low energy performance that will last for the life of these important education buildings.

Find out more at ***https://proctorgroup.com/products/wraptite***

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Midlands construction leaders say Budget is 'sticking plaster'

Sophie Horgan

Construction and housebuilding companies across the Midlands have warned the Chancellor had failed to address the key issues which would deliver lasting support for the sector.

Although the Chancellor announced planning reforms, including £48 million to recruit 350 extra planners in England and additional infrastructure growth funds for the Midlands, businesses say the Budget still fell "short of the mark".

Award-winning civil engineering and construction contractor McPhillips directly employs 240 people and has delivered more than 140 projects as principal contractor with a value of £300million in the last five years including Birmingham city centre public realm schemes.

Director Stuart MacKenzie warned confidence across the sector had been knocked by speculation ahead of the announcement: "We understand the tough decisions to protect the NHS and curb the government's debts and we're encouraged she made reference to speeding up the planning system but what we really need now is action. If we want to see growth in the economy and deliver on projects that will benefit and boost our communities then we need action that translates into a visible pipeline of work."

Sophie Horgan, director of Bromsgrove-based Horgan Homes said: "I'm afraid any confidence in this Budget and this chancellor was fatally undermined when Rachel Reeves performed her screeching U-turn over tax rises."

"It was clear evidence that this is a Chancellor who puts political expediency ahead of economic integrity. As a result, the Budget is a sticking plaster of a statement. I wanted to see clear action to prioritise the small housing sites and SME constructors who are the backbone of housebuilding in this country."

STA disappointed that housing targets not covered in Budget announcement

The Structural Timber Association (STA) is disappointed to see that the Labour party's previous commitment to building 1.5m new homes was not a focus in the budget announcement made by Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves.

The UK Government is already far behind on its commitments, building just 208,600 homes in the 2024/25 financial year, which was a 6% decrease on the previous year. While it has been stated that the Government would not target annual interim targets, there will need to be a significant increase in the following years. The increased use of structural timber is an effective means of achieving the commitments safely and effectively, with its speed of build and offsite benefits unrivalled by any other building material.

Andrew Orris, CEO of the STA, said: "The housebuilding industry has bolstered its structural timber capacity, building on an already well-positioned industry, however, the Government must drive the increased use of homes built with structural timber if its target of 1.5m homes by 2029 is to be achieved. As an association and an industry, we believe this should have been a stronger focus within the budget announcement. My question to the government is how do you plan to achieve this?"

Budget keeps builders stuck in the mud

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves delivered her second budget at the end of last month, unveiling an array of tax measures. Most importantly, she did not go ahead with the unviable landfill tax increase of 3,015%, instead implementing a smaller uplift. Ultimately, the biggest cost of the Budget was the increased cost to hiring, especially for firms hiring young people.

Richard Beresford, Chief Executive of the National Federation of Builders (NFB), said: "Construction feared the worst from the budget, particularly on landfill tax. While we were heard on this proposal, lower rate landfill tax, or 'muckaway', will still more than double in price. Furthermore, businesses who employ directly, take on apprentices, or who choose to decarbonise their vehicle fleets, will be throwing their arms up in frustration.

"There was nothing on stamp duty land tax rebates for the most efficient homes, no cancelling of the Building Safety Levy and not a murmur on Help to Buy, all of which means industry will remain in the mud.

"Death by a thousand taxes has already killed off many businesses, with insolvency rates still high within the construction industry. The Government must therefore redouble its effort to make projects more certain for investors, while helping the construction businesses who deliver them become more viable. Planning reform is one place which will help industry, and we can only assume that as they were omitted from the budget, they have been saved for the housing secretary, Steve Reed."

Rico Wojtulewicz, Head of Policy and Market Insight and the NFB, said: "The landfill tax proposal was an existential threat to the construction industry, dampening investment and growth. We are therefore delighted that the Government engaged so openly and diligently with industry to scrap their proposals. It was a real partnership.

The lower rate landfill tax will double for 2026-27 financial year, which will be a challenge, but we hope the next steps are for the Government to work with industry on analysing waste licensing and regulations."

'Augmenting' human intelligence with AI will transform our buildings

AI is already here and, as part of a human-centred process, will maximise the opportunities to transform the building industry – including optimising buildings at an early stage, enhancing creativity in design, developing new building materials, and delivering more sustainable buildings – explained Diego Padilla-Philipps, director, Decarbonisation and Innovation in Building Structures, WSP, in his JCT Povey Lecture in November.

Diego's presentation, titled "Human-Centred, Evidence-Based, Augmented Intelligence in Building Design", introduced the concept of 'Co-Design', a multidisciplinary approach to optimising building design. Co-Design combines the perspectives of architecture, engineering, and building services, with performance-driven data modelling and automation, incorporating AI tools, to deliver the most efficient design solutions, from which clients can make informed decisions about their building projects at an early stage.

The use of AI, rather than replacing traditional roles, becomes a powerful tool to assist in the organisation and flow of information, enabling the design team to make use of sophisticated automation models to optimise a building's performance for a range of given parameters.

With humans at the centre of the decision-making process, this framework provides the intelligence to deliver projects that not only meet the client's design requirements, but do so by maximising value, efficiency, and sustainability.

Diego Padilla-Philipps, said: "When we think about automation and AI, we need to think about upskilling, not deskilling. It is about putting the engineer, the designer, at the centre with access to all these tools so that we can, through analysis, through simulation, through early-stage valuation of buildings, really augment our intelligence and really transform how buildings are designed."

View the full presentation at: ***https://corporate.jctltd.co.uk/povey-lecture-2025/***

Open call for UK-Malaysia architectural practitioner team

The British Council has today announced an open call for a UK-Malaysia architectural practitioner team to develop and deliver the exhibition for the British Pavilion at the 2027 Venice Architecture Biennale.

Building on the success of the 2025 British Pavilion, which was commissioned as a UK-Kenya collaboration, the 2027 exhibition will mark 70 years of diplomatic relations between the UK and Malaysia.

The British Council invites teams consisting of exhibition designers, architects, curators, educators, researchers, or practitioners with other design or built environment backgrounds to submit proposals. All applicants must be experienced in exhibition development and delivery.

For the 2027 British Pavilion, teams are invited to build on the work of the British Council's UK-Malaysia 'Human-Nature' programme, which explores our relationship as humans with each other and with the natural environment.

The exhibition may explore the role of architecture and the built environment in relation to colonialism, extractive economies, identity and representation, inclusion, ancestral knowledge and wisdom, bio-diversity, the climate emergency, and cultural rights and heritage protection.

The British Council particularly welcomes proposals from practitioner teams where the UK partner is based outside of Greater London in England or based in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Submissions must be received via the online application system available at ***https://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/open-call-exhibition-proposals-british-council-commission-20th-international-architecture*** by 11.59pm UK time on 14 January 2026.

Planning application submitted for SPPARC-designed Camden Film Quarter

Yoo Capital has submitted a detailed application to Camden Council for Camden Film Quarter (CFQ), a £1bn creative-led regeneration that will establish London's first purpose-built, film-focused urban neighbourhood and set a new global benchmark for sustainable studio design.

CFQ will transform under-used industrial land in Kentish Town into a vibrant, mixed-use district where film production, new homes and education coexist. The application covers Yoo Capital-controlled land, which will deliver around 500 new homes (50% affordable), 11 state-of-the-art film and television studios, new creative workspaces, public parks, and education facilities in partnership with the National Film & Television School (NFTS) and the London Screen Academy (LSA) – two of the UK's leading creative education institutions.

The studios, designed by Camden-based architecture practice SPPARC and to be managed and operated by Oxygen Studios, introduce a pioneering vertical-studio model that allows production stages to stack efficiently, maximising limited urban land while creating an inspiring environment for film, television, and digital-content production.

Senior celebrates innovation, sustainability and sweet success *in 2025*

***Senior Architectural Systems** has marked 2025 with a series of transformative milestones, reinforcing its reputation as one of the UK's most forward-thinking manufacturers of aluminium windows, doors and curtain walling solutions. From product innovation to championing best practice in communicating technical information, and even a touch of beekeeping, Senior has had quite a year!*

SF52 curtain wall system gains EPD certification

Senior's commitment to transparency and sustainability has been further demonstrated with the launch of a new Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for its SF52 mullion-drained aluminium curtain wall system. Independently verified and developed in accordance with EN 15804+A2 and ISO 14025:2011, the SF52 EPD provides detailed insights into the system's environmental impact across its full lifecycle. Unlike many EPDs that include insulated glass units, which are typically not supplied by system houses, Senior has chosen to omit glazing from its calculations on the environmental credentials of its SF52 aluminium system. This is because the heavy weight of glass, combined with its relatively low carbon per kg, can make the overall figures for the aluminium system look lower than they really are after conversion. By omitting the glazing from its EPD, Senior ensures that the carbon figure per square metre reflects only the aluminium system itself, giving a more accurate and honest assessment.

This bold approach sets a new benchmark for product transparency in the fenestration industry and provides a solid foundation for the publication of further EPDs for Senior's doors and windows.

Celebrating a decade of PURe® innovation

This year also marks ten years of Senior's pioneering PURe® aluminium window and door system. Launched in 2015, PURe® was the first UK aluminium system to incorporate a thermal barrier made from expanded polyurethane foam, delivering exceptional thermal performance. To celebrate this milestone, Senior also unveiled a new closed-loop recycling process for its PURe® systems. This initiative ensures that end-of-life PURe® products can be fully recycled and reintroduced into the manufacturing cycle, reducing waste and supporting a circular economy.

Introducing the SPD 150 commercial door

Senior's product portfolio also continued its evolution with the development of the new SPD 150 aluminium commercial door. Designed to meet the demands of high-traffic environments, the SPD 150 offers enhanced durability, security, and ease of operation. With its robust construction and sleek design, the SPD 150 is set to become a go-to solution for commercial projects requiring reliable and stylish entrance systems.

Buzzing with biodiversity

Away from the factory floor, Senior has embraced a sweeter kind of sustainability with the installation of its very own beehive. Located at the company's dedicated Thermal Improvement Facility in Rotherham, the hive supports local biodiversity and reflects Senior's holistic approach to environmental responsibility. This year saw the harvesting of the first batch of honey, another milestone that was celebrated by staff and shared with customers.

For more information on Senior's products and initiatives, please visit ***www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk*** or search for Senior Architectural Systems on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

JT5

Delta Membranes – *reviewing achievements of the past year*

*As we conclude 2025, **Delta's** MD, Kevin Dodds presents a comprehensive 'year in review' summarising this year's events, achievements, and lessons learned. Join us as we reflect on the highlights of 2025...*

Exciting new products –
Koster Mortar Tight, MS Joint Sealant, Thermal Plaster
Delta is leading the waterproofing industry by introducing innovative products focused on accountability and risk mitigation, ensuring a safer and more reliable future for the sector.

Koster Mortar Tight is a professional waterproof liquid additive designed to prevent water transmission through renders, screeds, and sealing slurries. Mortar Tight boosts mortar impermeability against ground moisture, hydrostatic pressure, and driving rain. It promotes self-healing of micro-cracks through crystallization. Perfect for waterproofing in basements, tunnels, manholes, and pools, and works on bricks, masonry, concrete, and stone both indoors and outdoors.

Delta training courses
Our training courses, CPD Seminars, and webinars have had significant attendance this year. From on-site Resin Injection training to our latest CPD seminar 'Ground Gas and Waterproofing – How to remediate risks posed by contaminated sites', these avenues are vital for continuous learning and professional development. We are committed to fostering growth and development in the Delta Community.

To find out more information about Delta's training courses email: *info@deltamembranes.com*

Delta Pumps 3rd birthday
Delta Pumps Distribution Hub, a 3,500ft² basement drainage warehouse and distribution centre, proudly celebrates three years of growth and excellence in pump and drainage solutions.

BS 85500 and technical guidance
Aligning with the CIRIA Code of Practice for property flood resilience, BS 85500 includes a comprehensive list of flood water impacts on materials and building elements, detailed guidance with engineering drawings for new and retrofit resilient designs, and benefits from the increased attention to property resilience by the Property Resilience Roundtable.

Delta's Technical Team has created comprehensive Technical Guidance Notes for designers and installers. Visit our website – *www.deltamembranes.com/technical/technical-guidance-notes*

Delta HLA Plus
Smart home solutions have transformed lifestyles, from Alexa to Ring. The benefit of embracing smart automation is endless – ultimately, it's the enhancement for quality. Delta's groundbreaking HLA Plus continues to lead innovation in the industry. This advanced high-water level alarm system offers real-time remote monitoring and notifications. Its unique software gathers data from pumping systems, essential for a Type C Cavity Drained Waterproofing Solutions and surface water pump stations. Always alert, it detects critical alarm conditions instantly, enabling swift action in case of mechanical failure, saving time and reducing stress.

New products, new business literature, new approaches
In 2026, we will continue to lead the industry with our latest products, cutting-edge business literature, and innovative design strategies that reduce risk and drive success through Best Practice.

Digital landscape
The waterproofing industry, alongside construction, is being transformed by technologies like BIM, AI, robotics, and drones, enhancing efficiency, safety, and collaboration. While we support these advancements, we emphasise complementing rather than replacing our workforce. We aim to enhance our digital offerings through 2026.

We extend our sincere wishes for a pleasant Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Boosting energy efficiency – How low temperature heating can help save up to 30% energy

As the sector accelerates its push toward low-carbon, energy-efficient buildings, low-temperature heating systems are an increasingly attractive solution. In existing properties, this transition typically requires upgrading the boiler and, in many cases, replacing a significant portion of the radiators. While this represents a notable investment, Myson's findings show that energy savings of up to 30% are achievable, allowing the initial capital outlay to be recovered over time.

Because every building presents its own structural and operational profile, potential savings should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and generic benchmarks should be considered indicative, but what remains indisputable is that modern heating systems realise their full performance only when the heat generator(s), heat emitters and control technologies are precisely coordinated. For project teams, this integrated approach is essential to unlocking both energy efficiency and long-term value.

Renovating Heating Systems for Energy Savings

Buildings account for around 40% of global energy use, with heating systems responsible for nearly half of that, making the heating design a key lever for energy efficiency. To achieve maximum savings, the building envelope and system technology should be optimised together.

Lowering system temperatures through condensing technology is a proven strategy. Reduced flow temperatures allow more heat recovery from flue gases, increasing overall efficiency. To realise the full benefit, modern control systems and the integration of renewables, such as solar thermal, are essential.

When installing a new heat source and reducing system temperatures, the heat emitters must be matched to the new operating conditions. Today's radiators deliver far higher efficiency thanks to improved convector design, providing the same output as older units but at lower temperatures.

Fan-assisted radiators, like Myson Ulow E2, and fan convectors such as Myson iVector S2, can even operate comfortably below 40°C.

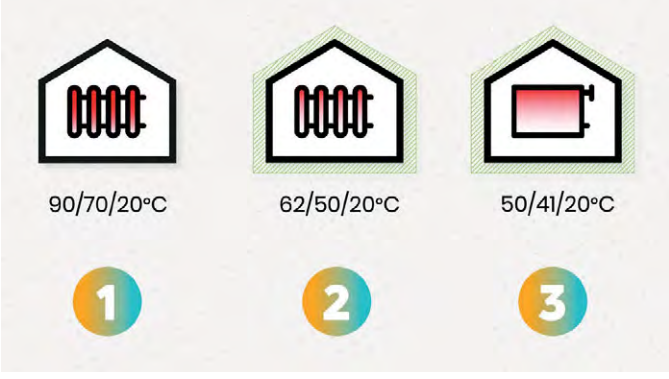
Highly responsive underfloor heating is also well-suited to low-temperature operation. Hybrid solutions, which combine radiators and underfloor heating, can often provide the best balance of comfort and efficiency in renovation projects.

Saving Energy, Step by Step

In an ideal world, both building owners and the planet would reap substantial energy savings through a single intervention. In practice, however, efficiency improvements tend to unfold gradually, with upgrades implemented as budgets, timelines and project priorities allow.

This incremental approach formed the basis of a study commissioned by Myson several years ago. Whilst building methods and heating technologies have continued to advance, the fundamental principles of thermodynamics remain unchanged, making the insights from that simulation just as relevant for today's renovation and retrofit strategies.

Comparing Old and New Heating Systems



Phase 1: No energy-saving measures applied
Phase 2: Building insulation upgraded
Phase 3: Old sectional radiators replaced with modern low-temperature emitters

The existing building uses a gas boiler as the heat source. The study examines an 18m^2 living space and tracks how targeted interventions affect energy demand. Initially, the room requires 125W/m^2 – around 2,250W in total – which is covered by traditional column radiators (110/600, DIN 4703) operating at 90/70/20°C. At these temperatures, the required radiator length is 1,600mm.

Upgrading the building's thermal insulation is the first step. This almost halves the heat demand to 1,170W, enabling a reduced temperature regime of 62/50/20°C. While the existing boiler can operate at these lower temperatures, switching to a condensing boiler further boosts system efficiency.

To match the new operating conditions and drive additional energy savings, the study then replaces the column radiators with type 22 panel radiators in the same length, 1,600mm. These emitters allow temperatures to drop further to 50/41/20°C, well within the optimal range for modern low-temperature systems.

Reduced Consumption, Higher Comfort

The combined measures deliver clear benefits. Improved insulation reduces heat losses and prepares the building envelope for future low-carbon technologies, including heat pumps. Lower system temperatures minimise distribution losses and unlock the full potential of condensing boilers. Meanwhile, modern radiators offer more responsive control, supporting precise temperature management and further reducing consumption.

Overall, the study shows that integrating these measures can yield 15-30% energy savings compared with the original setup, together with noticeably improved indoor climate comfort for the building's occupants.

Energy Savings as a Gradual Journey

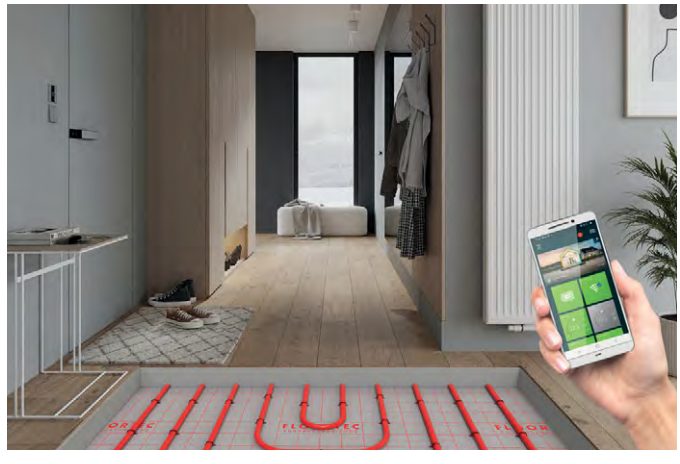
Our study highlights that meaningful energy efficiency is rarely achieved through a single upgrade; it is a cumulative, step-by-step process. When the building envelope is properly insulated and U-values are optimised, renovating the heating system with a modern heat source, low-temperature radiators and correct hydraulic balancing can deliver substantial, long-term energy savings.

Decarbonising Buildings

Even small interventions, such as upgrading to more modern heating controls or adding smart heating controls, helps to upgrade an existing heating system and further optimise fuel consumption. The right use of core control elements improves efficiency and energy use, subsequently reducing carbon footprint.

Complete Solutions for Every Need

Myson has a wide range of products suitable for low temperature heating systems, including vertical and horizontal panel radiators, designer radiators, fan-assisted radiators, intelligent fan convectors, underfloor heating, towel warmers and space saving plinth heater. A broad range of hydronic and electronic controls are available to suit any application.



www.myson.co.uk

streamlined skills *solutions*

In light of undeniable skills challenges in construction, ***James Moore****, National Sales Manager for Hardie Panel from James Hardie considers how the specification of cladding solutions can help address labour shortages further down the development chain...*

Labour shortages continue to shape the built environment. Project demand remains high, but as the construction sector grapples with an ageing workforce and persistent skills shortages, architects and specifiers are beginning to rethink design choices with buildability in mind. This means making specification choices around materials and methods based not only on performance and aesthetics, but also on their potential to ease pressure on site.

According to the Construction Skills Network, an extra 225,000 workers are needed by 2027 in the UK to meet demand. Is it time to seek ways to reduce this pressure, whilst still developing strategies to get more people into the sector?

Modern methods of construction

One of the key decisions that can influence on-site efficiency and reduce labour requirement is the choice between traditional brickwork and cladding for external building design.

The National Housebuilding Council predicts 33,000 more bricklayers are needed to meet the Government's house building target of delivering 300,000 new homes per year. That would represent an increase of around 79% on current levels.

The 2016 Farmer Report (Modernise or Die) provided a stark warning to the construction sector: Embrace modern methods or risk decline. Traditional trades such as bricklaying require years of training and are heavily reliant on an ageing workforce. Many contractors are struggling to secure experienced bricklayers, which inevitably leads to project delays, overrunning costs and inconsistent workmanship.

With bricklayers clearly in short supply, cladding, particularly fibre cement cladding, offers a cost-efficient, attractive and compliant alternative with lower labour intensity.

The benefits on site are evident. Pre-finished systems can reduce reliance on wet trades and can be installed significantly faster than traditional masonry because they are lightweight, consistent, and designed for ease of installation (albeit still by trained professionals).

Not only does cladding reduce the build time compared to

brickwork, but it also introduces opportunities for faster training and upskilling. This means more workers can be brought up to a competent standard quickly, supporting the industry in addressing immediate labour challenges.

Meeting new demands

Another consideration is that the Building Safety Act has raised the bar for installation competence. With the introduction of the safety regime, regulatory focus now extends beyond product compliance to who installs it (and how), with site-based quality assurance, traceability and documented training all routine requirements, particularly on Higher Risk Buildings.

Insurance providers are also tightening their own standards, increasingly seeking evidence of compliant systems, competent installation teams and robust support from manufacturers.

For cladding systems, this covers product testing and certification, but also that installers have been properly trained and that on-site guidance has been followed. It is more important than ever to work with cladding manufacturers that offer support throughout the build process.

Technical managers can engage early in the process to assist with system detailing, fire safety and product suitability. This specification-stage input can significantly reduce design-stage rework and help mitigate risk from the outset.

Once on site, added value services such as installation training, toolbox talks and live site visits guide contractors and subcontractors through best practice. This practical support is critical to ensure everyone understands how the system works, enabling projects run safely and without delays.

Supporting the sector

The skills shortage won't be solved overnight, but the shift to modern methods of construction is not just a trend. Solutions such as fibre cement cladding are uniquely positioned to help the industry move forward, while simultaneously addressing site challenges.

One thing is clear, smarter choices at the design and specification stage can play a role in reducing the impact of labour challenges. By integrating a whole-system approach with collaboration at its core, from informed specification to trained installation teams, we can deliver viable solutions to one of construction's most pressing challenges.

Modern cladding solutions offer flexible design, simple installation and fire-safe properties. More than that, they present an opportunity to design smarter, build faster and support a more competent, resilient construction workforce.

ENQUIRIES VISIT www.abcd-info.co.uk EMAIL datateam@c-cms.com POST use address card

Brett Martin
www.brettmartin.com/daylight-systems

Rooflight and daylight systems manufacturer Brett Martin has announced that Paul Blake has joined its daylight systems sales team as Specialist Sales Manager for the UK & Ireland. Bringing 17 years of experience, Paul will support customers with the specification and installation of Brett Martin's multiwall systems, Marlon Clickfix and Toploc.

Paul has gained a thorough understanding of the construction sector and polycarbonate daylight systems in his previous roles. Having worked within the industry since 2008, he brings excellent insight into customers' needs along with a practical understanding of common pain points.

At Brett Martin, Paul's remit currently covers two market leading polycarbonate multiwall solutions. The first is Marlon Clickfix, an architectural façade and glazing system that has been utilised across multiple sectors. The second is Toploc, a new system for the UK market that is suited to pitched and curved roofs. These two versatile solutions offer numerous options for architects, designers and specifiers looking to increase exposure to natural light for building occupants.

"Joining the team at Brett Martin is a really exciting next step for me," commented Paul. "The Marlon Clickfix and Toploc systems are the best on the market and we have a fantastic opportunity to expand our reach and get involved with many more projects."

JT202

Mountfield Services
www.mountfieldservices.co.uk

Mobility equipment specialist, Mountfield Services is delighted to extend its ongoing Associate Partnership with the iconic London Stadium, in association with Eleven Sports Media. The extension of the partnership follows another successful period for the company, who are passionate about improving the lives of disabled and elderly people nationwide.

Mountfield Services will continue to utilise its Associate Partnership with the London Stadium to connect with fans throughout every stage of the matchday, featuring on the digital displays and fan engagement platforms situated throughout the Premier League venue.

Lee Anderson comments: "We at Mountfield are very excited to renew our partnership with the London Stadium for another three years. We thoroughly enjoyed the experience and success of the past three seasons, and we're hoping for more."

The Essex-based company specialises in the supply and installation of all types of mobility equipment and all associated building works. It undertakes work for a variety of customers, including elderly and disabled independents, local authorities, social services, grant maintained disabled facilities, as well as housing associations.

It operates a 24hr, 365 days a year call out service and, in most circumstances, an engineer will arrive within four hours of the initial call.

JT203

Leyland/AkzoNobel
leylandsdm.co.uk and duluxheritage.co.uk

From 1-14 December, leading decorating retailer Leyland and global paint brand AkzoNobel will donate £2 for every tin of Dulux Trade or Dulux Heritage (750ml or larger) sold across their London network of stores – £1 from each business – online and in-store – to St Mungo's charity.

St Mungo's has been on the frontline of homelessness in London for over 55 years and also runs services in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Brighton, Bristol, Oxford and Reading. New figures show that 4,711 people slept on the streets of London between July and September 2025 – and nearly half of them were doing so for the first time.[1] This rise is being driven by the ongoing housing and cost of living crisis, leaving thousands without a safe place to call home.

Martin Hastings, CEO of Leyland, said: "Homelessness is one of London's most urgent challenges. With 35 Leyland stores across the capital and a 36th opening in December, we're part of these communities – and we want to help. Dulux Trade and Dulux Heritage are consistently among our bestselling paints, and we hope this initiative will drive even more sales to boost the support we can offer to St Mungo's."

Peter Howard, Sustainability, Regulatory & Partnership Lead at AkzoNobel Decorative Paints UK (parent company of Dulux), added: "This is a brilliant example of brands, customers and communities coming together. When decorators and DIYers choose Dulux Trade or Dulux Heritage, they're not just transforming spaces – they're helping people rebuild their lives. We hope this campaign brings real colour, warmth and hope to those who need it most this Christmas."

St Mungo's is a leading homelessness charity with national influence. They work in partnership with local authorities, health colleagues and communities, to end homelessness and rebuild lives. Last year, the charity supported approximately 26,000 people who were homeless, or at risk of homelessness, through 138 services. They support almost 2,000 people every night.

Hetti Hartnall, Senior Corporate Partnerships Lead at St Mungo's, said: "This partnership goes far beyond paint. Every tin sold across the two weeks will help people to rebuild their lives and find a safe place to call home."

St Mungo's also runs a construction skills programme, giving people access to accredited training in painting, wallpapering, plumbing, dry lining and more – opening doors to secure employment and long-term stability.

Visit the St Mungo's website at www.mungos.org

[1]CHAIN quarterly report, Greater London, July-September, 2025

JT204

CRL Stone introduces intriguing Taj Mahal to popular Quartz collection

CRL Stone has added to its celebrated Quartz collection with the launch of Taj Mahal.

Featuring warm, rich, earthy tones, Taj Mahal is an intriguing Quartz surface that radiates natural beauty. Aptly named after one of the Seven Wonders of the World, it embraces the trend for nature-inspired interiors to bring balance to darker colour schemes and intrigue to paler palettes.

Packed with charm and character, Taj Mahal is perfect for kitchens and bathrooms and will make an impressive style statement in every interior. From islands, work surfaces and splashbacks to furniture, floors and walls, Taj Mahal brings functional beauty to any residential or commercial setting.

Like all the finishes within CRL Stone's bestselling Quartz collection, Taj Mahal is an infinitely versatile, non-porous surface that is stain-, scratch- and heat resistant. Ideal for busy households, it is durable and strong and also benefits from being incredibly easy to keep clean as well as ultra-hygienic.

Part of CRL Stone's Silica Free Collection, Taj Mahal has a shiny, polished finish and is available in slabs measuring 1600 x 3200mm and thicknesses of 20 or 30mm.

www.crlstone.co.uk

New affordable, bio-based contract kitchen range

Keller Kitchens, long recognised as an industry leader in kitchen sustainability, is taking a bold leap forward. In early 2026, the Dutch kitchen specialist is set to launch an entirely new range that combines carbon-neutral manufacturing with biobased materials and affordability; a first in the industry.

enduura elba is a truly sustainable kitchen solution. The range will debut in four on-trend colours, carefully curated to meet the evolving demands of today's design-conscious market. All wood materials are sourced from sustainably managed European forests, fully compliant with the European Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), ensuring responsible harvesting practices that support biodiversity and ecological balance.

enduura elba is not only sustainable; it's circular. Designed with the future in mind, every element is suitable for repurposing. One standout feature is Keller's exclusive biobased binder, derived from natural by-products, which enables the production of kitchens with zero material waste.

The outer surfaces not only look stunning; they are crafted using cutting-edge technology, new to the industry, that delivers a highly durable, long-lasting finish.

www.kellerkitchens.com

Knauf Insulation launches OmniFit® Thermal and Sound Slab

Knauf Insulation has launched OmniFit® Thermal and Sound Slab, an alternative to low-density rock mineral wool insulation that offers superior thermal performance and is Quiet Mark certified.

"OmniFit® Thermal and Sound Slab is designed to do more to meet market needs," explained Liliya Luke, Glass Mineral Wool Product Manager at Knauf Insulation. "Merchants can store more in the same amount of space, installers will find it easier to handle, and end users can expect equivalent acoustic absorption and better thermal performance."

JT7

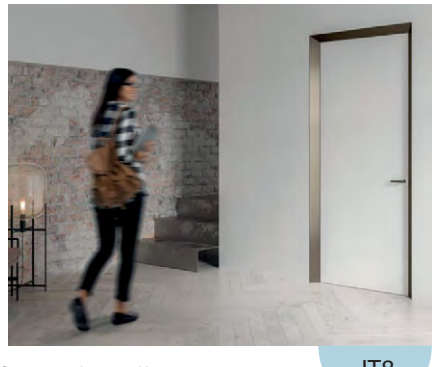
Quiet Mark certification means OmniFit® Thermal and Sound Slab complies with Part E requirements for acoustic insulation and performs as well as typical low-density rock mineral wool. And its thermal performance is better, with a lambda value of 0.035W/mK. It is also non-combustible, with a Euroclass A1 reaction to fire classification[1].

OmniFit® Thermal and Sound Slab is manufactured with ECOSE®, Knauf Insulation's unique plant-based binder that contains no added formaldehyde and emits low levels of VOCs.

www.knauf.com **Learn more:**

[1]*As set out in changes to the building regulations 2010 which bans the use of combustible materials, limiting use of materials to those achieving A1 or A2-s1,d0 on buildings in scope of the ban (as defined in regulation 7(4)).*

ECLISSE launches the new ECLISSE 40 Collection



JT8

ECLISSE UK is proud to introduce the ECLISSE 40 Collection – a new generation of architectural door solutions designed to deliver premium performance and aesthetics.

The ECLISSE 40 Collection offers specifiers a distinctive architectural solution where both design expression and precision detailing are required. Characterised by its signature 40-degree chamfered edge, the hinged system creates a bold visual transition between wall and opening, while maintaining flush integration on the opposing face.

Designed for contemporary residential and commercial interiors, the system enables a strong aesthetic statement without compromising wall continuity. One side delivers a sculptural recessed effect, while the reverse remains fully flush with the wall, allowing seamless integration with paint or wall finishes. This dual aesthetic makes it ideal for zoning spaces, creating visual markers within minimal or concealed interiors.

This innovative collection offers the same quality, precision and long-term reliability that specifiers and installers expect from ECLISSE, while providing a statement interior design that captures the eye.

Explore more at **www.eclisse.co.uk**

specifying for long-term damp and mould *protection*

***Bobby Hall**, Director of Pazco, sets out the requirements of meeting Awaab's Law...*

On 27 October 2025 Awaab's Law came into force, setting a new legal benchmark detailing how social landlords must handle damp and mould issues. For the first time, housing associations and local authorities are legally obliged to inspect and remedy these issues within clear, strict and time-bound parameters.

This legislation marks a pivotal moment, not just for housing management but throughout the design and construction community. It signals a shift away from traditional reactive maintenance towards proactive and evidence-based asset care. For architects, developers and contractors involved in the delivery and refurbishment of homes, Awaab's Law reinforces the need to eliminate risk via intelligent design at the earliest stages, thereby ensuring healthy, resilient and compliant buildings for their lifetime.

Understanding mould: A persistent building challenge

Mould is a naturally occurring fungus that can be found almost anywhere moisture and oxygen are present and, therefore, lives and thrives in most everyday environments. Indoors, however, mould growth poses serious risks to both residents' health and the fabric of the building.

When mould spores settle on damp spots or surfaces they begin growing and digesting whatever they make contact with in order to survive, eventually destroying the surface on which they live. There are proven and indisputable health risks associated with indoor mould growth. These risks are especially harmful for children, elderly people and those with pre-existing respiratory illnesses.

Mould spreads by producing microscopic spores (2-10µm in size)

that are carried and spread by the air. Spores may remain able to grow for years after they are produced. Additionally, whether or not the spores are actually alive, the allergens in and on them may remain allergenic for years.

These spores are ubiquitous in indoor environments, meaning the key to prevention lies in controlling moisture, improving ventilation and maintaining regular internal surface temperatures

The "black mould" misconception

"Black mould" is a term often used loosely to describe any dark mould growth, though the colour itself is not necessarily linked to toxicity. True "toxic black mould" refers to Stachybotrys chartarum which is just one of many common types of mould, others include Penicillium, Aspergillus, and Cladosporium. Regardless of species, visible mould is a sign of underlying moisture imbalance that must be properly diagnosed and addressed.

Design responsibility and long-term remediation

Under Awaab's Law, housing providers will need to demonstrate not only that remedial works have been undertaken, but also that they have achieved lasting results. Cosmetic "quick fixes", such as painting over visible mould or applying temporary treatments will no longer meet strict legal or ethical standards.

For the design and construction sector this brings into focus the importance of specifying robust, long-life materials and coatings that will actively inhibit microbial growth. It also highlights the need for collaborative working between architects, building surveyors, contractors and maintenance teams to ensure that design intent translates into long-term performance on site.

Why traditional treatments fall short

Many 'off the shelf' anti-mould paints provide only short-term relief, lasting typically around 12-18 months before reapplication is required. These products suppress symptoms, rather than solving the underlying microbial problem, which leads to a costly cycle of mould re-growth followed by the reapplication of relatively ineffective paint. This is not only ineffective but also drives up maintenance costs.

By contrast, active high-performance and scientifically proven anti-mould coatings, designed to prevent mould growth over the long term, can deliver lasting protection when combined with appropriate ventilation and moisture management strategies.

Preventative design and raising industry standards

For architects, developers and building managers Awaab's Law offers a powerful incentive to prioritise preventative design. This includes:

- Designing to minimise cold bridging and condensation risk.
- Integrating mechanical and passive ventilation solutions.
- Specifying breathable, moisture-tolerant finishes and materials.
- Introducing scientifically proven anti-mould coatings and finishes as part of the specification.

By embedding these principles into project delivery professionals can help housing providers meet their new statutory obligations whilst importantly safeguarding occupant wellbeing.

A catalyst for better homes

Awaab's Law is more than a compliance milestone; it's a catalyst for raising standards across the housing sector. The law challenges architects and the construction industry to focus on long-term building health, resilience and social responsibility.

In short, this is an opportunity for the industry to lead, designing and delivering homes that remain safe and healthy for generations to come.

JT210

JT212

Interpon Cost of Corrosion report identifies hidden billion-dollar opportunity

Corrosion has long been seen as an unavoidable cost of doing business, but a new global study reveals it's fast becoming one of manufacturing's biggest untapped opportunities. The new Cost of Corrosion report from **Interpon** shows that up to US$875 billion in preventable costs could be recovered through smarter protection strategies, and highlights the industries turning this long-standing challenge into a driver of innovation and performance.

Published by AkzoNobel's Interpon Powder Coatings, the global study surveyed 1,000 manufacturing leaders across key industries and regions. Featuring a wealth of insights, it explores how manufacturers are balancing protection, cost, and sustainability amid rising environmental and regulatory pressures. The detail and insights within this landmark study reinforce Interpon's position at the forefront of advancing corrosion protection.

Hidden costs are significant: Almost a third (32%) say their biggest expense comes from lost customers and product returns, and damaging reputations. Another 28% emphasize the environmental cost of waste and landfill.

Protection is mission critical: There is universal understanding that anti-corrosion protection is important, and nearly half (44%) view it as essential to their business operations.

Download the full report at **www.interpon.com/insights/cost-of-corrosion-report**

JT213

Safe, fun and durable paint options

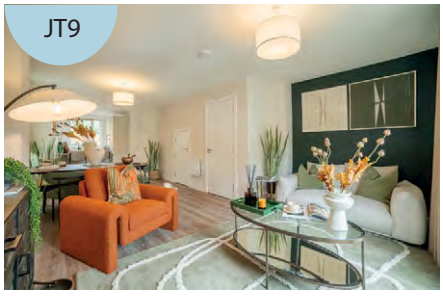
Technical Interiors Expert at **Earthborn**, Jon Mee comments: "With so many paint finishes on the market, it can be tricky to know which products are right for you and your home. If your home is subject to scuffs, fingerprints and marks, a practical emulsion that is hard wearing and suitable for dirt-prone areas is essential – from children's bedrooms to bathrooms and hallways. Choose a finish that can easily be wiped down time after time as this will be easier to maintain in the long-term, whilst still ensuring that the colour looks fantastic."

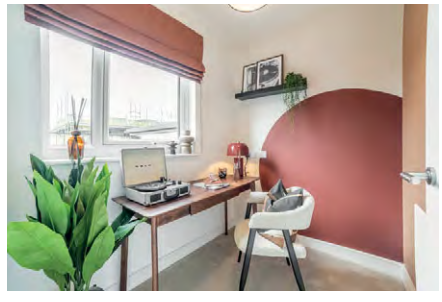
Earthborn's characterful and eco-friendly Humpty Dumpty and Polka Dot colourways provide a beautifully eye-catching backdrop for play areas and bedrooms, especially when paired with other vibrant colours. For both homeowners and their guests to enjoy, neutral colours such PawPrint, Wood Smoke and Hopscotch will carry through the years, brightening up any room and working beautifully with additional pops of colour.

Durable, washable and virtually VOC free, Earthborn's Lifestyle emulsion is incredibly hard-wearing with an ultra-low sheen finish. Formulated without oils, the paints are a safer option for the home and those living in it.

https://earthbornpaints.co.uk

JT9





HMG Paints Colours used in Collyhurst Village show homes

As the development of Collyhurst Village ushers in an exciting new chapter for the community, **HMG Paints** is proud to play a part in shaping this transformation. As Manchester continues to grow through regeneration, the team at HMG Paints is delighted to welcome new neighbours and support a project that reflects the spirit and heritage of the area.

Working collaboratively with FEC UK and Project Furniture Residential, HMG Paints supplied a full range of interior coatings for the Collyhurst Village show home. Drawing inspiration from the company's iconic Manchester Collection, HMG developed bespoke colour palettes designed to complement the village's architecture while capturing the warmth, innovation and character of the region's past.

A key product used throughout the show home was HMG's Vinyl Matt Emulsion, a premium Manchester-manufactured coating known for its exceptional coverage and smooth, contemporary finish. Tinted to order for precise colour match, each batch supported the team's tailored schemes while also being supplied in sustainable packaging – aligning with Collyhurst Village's broader commitment to responsible development.

Key shades from HMG's Essentials Range and Manchester Colour Collection were featured throughout the home, including Angel Meadow, Mancnolia and Newton Blue. HMG even crafted a brand-new shade, Grove – a rich, earthy green that captures the area's renewal while bringing calm balance to the interior. The study stands out as a creative highlight, showcasing bold colour blocking and the heritage shade Herbert, named after HMG's founder.

The Collyhurst Village project has offered HMG Paints a unique opportunity to celebrate community, creativity and local craftsmanship – just half a mile from where the paint itself was made. By blending heritage with modern design, the team has created a colour story that feels Manchester authentically. Homeowners can explore these shades firsthand through the Manchester Collection and Essentials Shade Card, now available via the HMG Paints Shop.

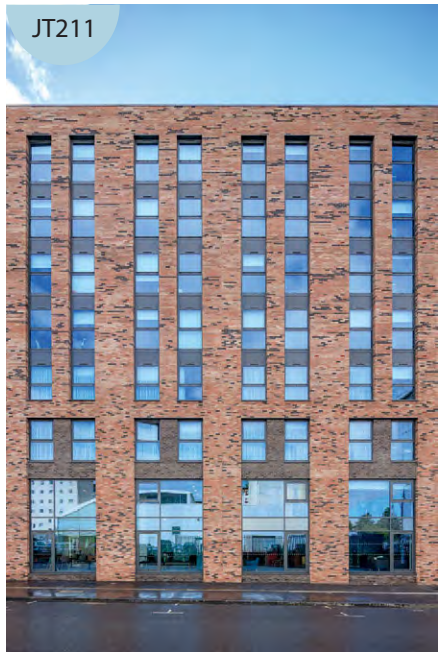
www.hmgpaint.com

QUALICOAT and the growth of quality powder *coatings*

The growth in quality architectural powder coatings specified to the **QUALICOAT** Specification is driven primarily by increasing expectations around durability and long-term performance. As buildings become more complex and client demands rise, architects and façade engineers are seeking guarantees that coated aluminium will maintain colour, gloss, and surface integrity for decades. QUALICOAT's rigorous testing regime which covers pre-treatment, application, curing and weathering performance, gives specifiers confidence that the finish will perform consistently across projects and climates. This assurance is particularly valued as projects push for extended lifecycle efficiencies and reduced maintenance requirements.

A second major factor is the industry-wide shift towards greater transparency and accountability in material selection. With more emphasis on traceability, verified performance and proven compliance. QUALICOAT offers a recognised, independent benchmark that distinguishes genuinely high-quality coatings from unverified alternatives. The Specification sets clear, measurable standards for coaters and suppliers, helping architects avoid the risks associated with poor pre-treatment, inconsistent film thicknesses, or non-compliant powders. As façade failures and premature degradation become less tolerated in the market QUALICOAT's stamp of quality offers essential reassurance.

QUALICOAT licenses pre-treatment systems by subjecting them to a rigorous programme of testing and ongoing auditing. Chemical suppliers submit their pre-treatment systems for evaluation where they are assessed for corrosion resistance, coating adhesion, reproducibility, and compatibility with approved powders. These systems undergo laboratory testing, real-world weathering trials, and performance checks against the QUALICOAT Specification. Once approved, the pre-treatment system is added to QUALICOAT's list of licensed products, but approval is not permanent,



suppliers must pass regular inspections and provide evidence that their formulations and manufacturing processes remain consistent.

Powder manufacturers are also licensed in a similar but equally demanding manner. A powder supplier must prove that their products meet QUALICOAT's strict performance requirements, including mechanical robustness, UV resistance, colour and gloss stability, and long-term exterior durability. Independent laboratories carry out accelerated weathering tests and chemical analyses to verify compliance before a product can be classed as QUALICOAT approved. Like pre-treatment suppliers, powder manufacturers are also subject to continuous monitoring, periodic inspections, and random sampling to ensure ongoing conformity. This dual licensing system ensures that both pre-treatment and powder supplies are controlled, reliable, and fully compatible with QUALICOAT-licensed coating plants.

Sustainability pressures are accelerating the adoption of QUALICOAT-certified finishes. Powder coating is already a low-VOC, efficient, and recyclable finishing method, and QUALICOAT builds on this by promoting robust, long-lasting systems that reduce the need for re-coating or replacement. Manufacturers and coaters adopting QUALICOAT often invest in cleaner technologies, improved pre-treatment systems, and better process control, aligning with environmental certification schemes and whole-life carbon goals. As clients, developers, and regulators place more emphasis on responsible construction, QUALICOAT has become a clear indicator of quality, reliability, and sustainable practice in architectural finishing.

As we move into 2026, QUALICOAT UK & Ireland is experiencing a clear upward trajectory in membership and market influence. There has been a steady increase in license applications for powder coat applicators, powder manufacturers and pre-treatment system suppliers joining our ranks. Over thirty major powder coat applicators across the UK and Ireland are now licensed and regularly audited against the QUALICOAT Specification.

So why are more coaters joining? There are three main reasons. First, market demand, architects, facade contractors and systems manufacturers increasingly specify the QUALICOAT Specification because it offers recognised assurance of durability, quality and performance for architectural powder coated aluminium. Second, competitive differentiation, coaters joining QUALICOAT can make use of the QUALICOAT approved quality label, helping them win more premium contracts. Third, process and specification support, QUALICOAT doesn't just licence, it supports members with training, technical updates and inspection regimes which help coaters raise their internal quality systems and demonstrate compliance.

The up-to-date QUALICOAT Specification, which includes QUALICOAT 3.0, is available on request through UK & Ireland Association website, ***qualicoatuki.org*** the website also offers an up-to-date list of licensed UK and Ireland Powder Suppliers, Pre-treatment Suppliers and Applicators including the applicators who carry the Seaside class accreditation.

reviving traditional british skills for contemporary *heritage projects*

*Many of Britain's grandest properties are steeped in history, creating a natural connection between high-end construction and traditional craftsmanship. Modernising these homes demands a highly bespoke approach, involving a meticulous process of material selection, repair-or-replace decisions and production of one-off samples for approval. Drawing on their shared experience in super-prime and listed buildings, the Design Management Team of main contractor **ACT**, in collaboration with SB Joinery, explore how today's renovation projects reinterpret traditional British craftsmanship for contemporary living...*

Preserving History Through Materials Selection

Selecting the right materials lies at the heart of successful heritage construction, where integrity, performance and longevity must work hand-in-hand.

Replicating the composition and use of historical plaster is a specialist art, as traditional lime-hair plaster takes considerable expertise to mix and apply layer-by-layer. This achieves not only authenticity but also resilience: choosing the correct plaster maintains the long-term health of a building by avoiding breathability and compatibility issues, and tolerating movement inherent in old structures.

Use of conservation grade glass produced using artisanal methods is also required for listed buildings, as glassmaking throughout history has evolved considerably. Traditional sash window glass has a subtle rippled appearance that gives historic façades their characteristic charm. By pairing a hand-drawn

outer pane with a slimline inner layer of modern float glass, specialist joiners are able to combine period aesthetics with 21st century standards. This results in a double glazed unit that delivers excellent thermal and acoustic performance without compromising on the building's appearance. To all but the most discerning eye, the result is virtually indistinguishable from a single-glazed original sash window – achieving an ideal balance between heritage character and contemporary comfort.

On high-profile conservation projects, full traceability of materials can also be sought. For example, oak is hand-selected with the client from specific forests and tracked through to the exact pieces it forms, providing complete transparency over the origin and use of every joinery element.

Integrating Modern Methods with Historic Techniques

Traditional craft doesn't end with replication; it evolves in response to modern standards and regulations. A prime example is the upgrading of original doors within historic buildings, when existing internal doors no longer meet fire s afety requirements. Their replacements are constructed around a discreet fire-resistant core, with the outer shell maintaining visual authenticity. Specialist joiners create the exterior using traditional techniques such as mortise-and-tenon joints, replicating every detail and assembling each piece by hand. The bespoke designed door undergoes rigorous testing and certification to ensure fire compliance.

Modern technology also plays a valuable role in enabling faithful restoration. By carefully removing a small portion of the wall decoration and analysing this in a laboratory, it Is possible to determine the original colour composition and achieve a historically resonant paint finish. Similarly, 3D scans of existing windows and openings create digital models that identify millimetre discrepancies, allowing for perfect matching of new and old. Laser scanners capture every curve and contour of handrails, producing highly accurate CAD models. This enables handrails to be crafted off-site but with exacting precision – saving installation time and minimising wastage of materials.

The Sustainability Benefits of Traditional Practices

Artisanal building techniques have long embodied sustainability principles, particularly in their use of local resources and preference for reusable materials. As the industry becomes increasingly aware of its environmental impact, demand for these traditional methods could come full circle.

For instance, when lime-based renders and mortars are used, brickwork can later be dismantled if needed without damaging the bricks, allowing them to be repurposed for future projects. Similarly, lime plaster has an inherently low carbon footprint, as it reabsorbs atmospheric carbon during curing and continues to do so throughout its lifespan.

Rebuilding the Past for Future Generations

Artisan methods are indispensable in contemporary heritage construction, relying on close relationships with specialist makers. These traditional building skills are becoming scarce, with many of the most accomplished craftspeople operating within family-run firms whose expertise is passed down through generations.

Yet as environmental priorities reshape modern building practices, there is growing recognition that heritage crafts answer contemporary concerns: repair over replacement, use of natural materials and long-term durability. Reviving traditional British building craft is not only about preserving the beauty of the past, but also creating a sustainable future.

Image credit SB Joinery

JT216

Sustainable rooflight for Cumbrian Center Parcs

Brett Martin's Marvault rooflights have been installed as part of a multi-award-winning refurbishment at Center Parcs' Whinfell Forest holiday village in Penrith, Cumbria. The customer required a solution that would increase the thermal efficiency of the large, subtropical space in order to reduce heating costs and the sites carbon emissions. Brett Martin's vaulted multiwall polycarbonate rooflight system, which covers an area of approximately 2,785m², provided the solution, enabling the existing roof to be kept whilst reducing heating usage by 11.14%.

To address the issue of heat loss through the roof, the team from Center Parcs reached out to Brett Martin in the hope of finding a solution that would continue to allow the maximum amount of natural light into the space, whilst improving environmental and cost efficiency. Brett Martin put forward its Marvault rooflight system which utilises aluminium and polycarbonate to create a barrel-vaulted shape. This shape increases light penetration and enables spans of up to 7m to be bridged with no restriction on length. This suited the requirements of Center Parcs as the existing roof utilised long unbroken rooflights that spanned 4m and ran from 30 to 61m in length.

Marvault is glazed with two layers of Brett Martin's 16mm Marlon ST Longlife polycarbonate. This lightweight, multiwall insulated panel provides increased efficiency by reducing heat loss through its seven layers, as well as providing UV protection.

www.brettmartin.com

ASWS extends life of hardwood windows at London Ikea store

JT217

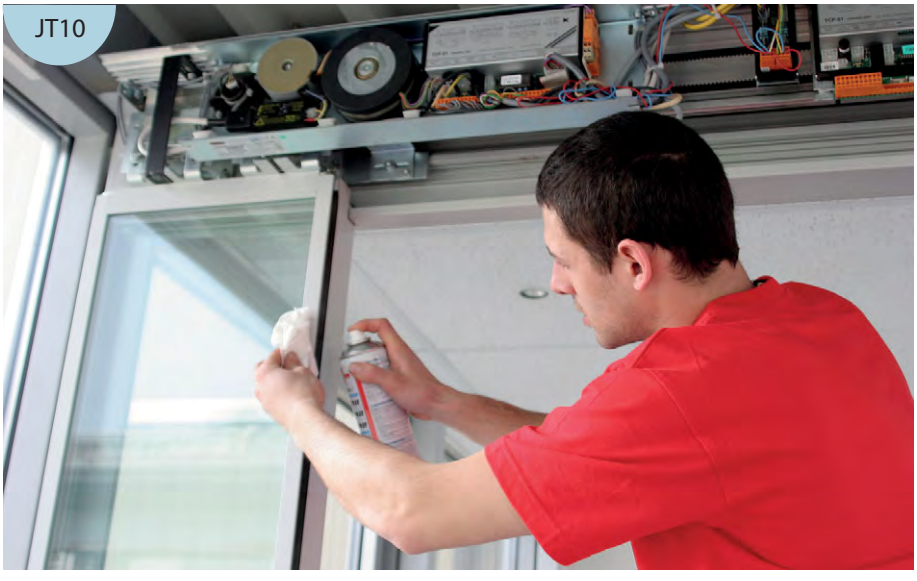
The creation of the Ikea's latest 214 Oxford Street store in London has featured the conservation of 14 large hardwood windows which had been exposed to the worst of the weather for more than a century.

The chain's ESG commitments focus on three key areas – Health & Sustainable Living, Climate, and Nature & Circularity. It follows that the carefully considered in-situ repair of these mansard frames by **Associated Steel Window Association (ASWS)**, offers a respectful resonance.

Mainly measuring 1.6m wide by 2.7m high, though some were 3.7m long, the ageing wooden windows were close to floor level and reached up into the eaves. While the actual frames remained in place, ASWS demounted the sashes so that they could be stripped and repaired in its compact workshop set up on site. This stage of the work included routing in new weather seals as a straightforward but significant energy saving measure. Once the conservation work was complete, any broken glass was replaced along with a switch to safety glass along all the lower sections. The reglazing was carried out using security tape and then a silicone top cap bead applied externally. Internally the original solid timber beads were refitted. In addition, all of the hinges were replaced while the rest of the ironmongery was buffed and polished before being reinstalled.

www.asws.co.uk

JT10



Protect your asset with a TORMAX automatic door service contract

In an era where convenience and inclusivity define modern spaces, automatic doors have become the standard for modern buildings, with key access points often being integral to the smooth functioning of the premises.

Experts in door automation, **TORMAX UK** provides nationwide coverage through its team of service engineers, offering 24-hour emergency callouts alongside scheduled maintenance and repairs for almost any automatic door system. These services protect capital investment by helping to ensure a long and reliable working life with minimum unscheduled downtime.

A TORMAX Planned Maintenance Contract (PMC) allows for regularly scheduled servicing, ensuring the entrance always complies with current health and safety standards and maintains optimal performance.

"Today's automatic door systems are more advanced than ever," says Simon Roberts, MD for TORMAX UK. "Over time, dirt, leaves, and other debris – or even water infiltration during heavy rain – can impact the system's performance or lead to complete failure. Regular, comprehensive servicing helps detect potential issues early, preventing long-term damage and keeping key components functioning at their best.

"Our goal is always to repair rather than replace, reducing costs and disruption. With every engineer carrying a range of spare parts, we can often complete repairs on the first visit."

With proper care and servicing, a TORMAX automatic door can deliver safe, efficient performance for 25 years or more – making a strong partnership with a trusted maintenance provider essential.

www.tormax.co.uk

JT218

New whitepaper published on how to best protect structural steel from fire

Promat has published a new whitepaper examining the most effective way to protect structural steel from fire.

An increasingly popular construction method, structural steel needs to be protected against the threat of fire to ensure structural integrity is maintained if exposed to high temperatures. With both fire protection board systems and specialist intumescent paint used to protect structural steel, the whitepaper looks at which system offers the most comprehensive protection – and in which applications - amid demand for increasing data in compliance with the Building Safety Act.

Focusing on the application of Part B of the Building Regulations, and the Association for Fire Protection's best practice guidance, the document, titled 'Protecting structural steel: Fire board vs intumescent paint', breaks that down into real-life applications, addressing the benefits and problems with each system. The whitepaper also focuses on how compartmentation can be maintained in structural steel framed buildings to ensure that should a fire break out in an area protected by a passive fire protection 'compartment' it is contained.

Download the whitepaper at: **www.promat.com/en/construction/applications/structural-protection/expert-support/download-white-paper**

Improved smoke protection

JT219

Series 61 (S61) is the latest smoke control damper to come to market from independent air movement specialist **Gilberts**.

The single 'door sized' S61 compliments the company's established, successful UKCA certified and CE marked Series 60 (S60) smoke evacuation damper.

The new S61 has been designed, tested and certified to EN1366-2, EN1366-10 and EN12101-8 in both open-to-closed and closed-to-open (with its associated grille attachment). It has attained ES classification for integrity and smoke in air leakage tests, exceeding current legislative requirements and guidance. As its counterpart Series 60, S61 is manufactured from galvanised steel and will provide up to 120 minutes' smoke and fire integrity.

Providing up to 1m² geometric free area within a 800 x 1920mm opening list size, S61 delivers a unit specifically to suit mechanically ventilated smoke shafts, with its enhanced air leakage reduction. Front access actuators and grille alignment brackets further simplify installation, operation and maintenance.

Ian Rogers, Gilberts' Sales Director, said: "Series 60 goes from strength to strength: we believed it was the best of its kind when launched, and that has been reinforced with its attainment of certification for maintenance of opening confirmation. It remains the 'go to' option."

https://gilbertsblackpool.com

JT11

GEZE Wins 'Fire Door Product of the Year' at the National Fenestration Awards

GEZE UK is delighted to announce we have been recognised at the National Fenestration Awards 2025, winning the 'Fire Door Product of the Year' category for our 'Slimdrive EMD-F Powered Swing Door Drive System'.

The awards took place at Doncaster Racecourse on the 25 October 2025 and welcomed the fenestration industries leading companies from across the UK. This award highlights GEZE's commitment to delivering innovative, compliant, and intelligent solutions to the door and access control industry.

Kaz Spiewakowski, Managing Director at GEZE UK, said: "I have to say I'm proud that GEZE has achieved success at the National Fenestration Awards 2025, winning the Fire Door Product of the Year Award for our EMD-F Powered Swing Door Drive. We take great pride in this recognition, as it highlights the EMD-F as an industry-leading fire door product."

The GEZE EMD-F is one of our most established powered swing door drives, designed for safety, accessibility, and smart building integration. It has undergone extensive and rigorous testing, including fire testing, to ensure compliance and reliability in a variety of individual fire door applications.

Paul Carroll, GEZE UK's Technical Manager, added: "Our commitment to stringent testing provides both GEZE and our customers with confidence in the EMD-F's ability to meet demanding application requirements. It's a testament to the quality, performance, and innovation that underpin all GEZE products."

www.geze.co.uk/en • info.uk@geze.com

Magply virgins AHR and Q9 sign up for a repeat

AHR architects and specialist sub-contractors Q9 Cladding Solutions have given Magply boards a definitive thumbs up.

The use of fire-resistant roofing boards from leading UK manufacturer Magply on an exemplar Passivhaus school was a first-time experience for the architects and installers. And both would be more than happy to use them again.

Magply's 12mm-thick boards, which meet Euroclass EN13501 (A1 Non-Combustible) standards, were specified for a warm roof build-up by AHR architects for Caledonia High School in Rosyth, Fife, Scotland.

The magnesium oxysulfate boards were installed over metal roof deck sheets by specialist sub-contractor Q9 Cladding Solutions for main contractor BAM to help provide a lightweight, flat surface for the waterproofing.

AHR senior architect Keith Peterson said: "We were initially looking at using a weatherproof cement board but the contractor was keen to look at alternatives as this was quite an expensive solution over the whole roof area.

"We also considered not using any board product at all and installing the roof VCL directly onto the structural deck, but our concern was that without a flat substrate, we might have had issues achieving the airtightness requirements for the project.

"The Magply board was a cost-effective solution that would ensure the airtight VCL layer was well supported to help achieve the Passivhaus standard. And the Magply boards have performed well. We don't have any formal air test results, but initial smoke testing confirmed that the envelope is performing as intended for a Passivhaus project."

He added: "From my understanding, the site team have been quite happy laying the boards and have been able to achieve a good level of workmanship overall. I had not used Magply before but would be happy to specify them again based on the experience we have had so far on our projects."

Installers Q9 Cladding Solutions had a team of six men on site.

Contracts manager Graeme Ritchie said: "We have used a similar product in the past but this was the first time we had used the Magply product. It was the specified product on this project. It was great. There were no issues with its installation. The boards were easy to cut and quick to lay. Time was mainly spent fixing the boards down due to the number of fixings required but we didn't find any particular challenges."

He added: "We don't specify products ourselves but we have recently been working on a project using a similar product and I believe Magply is a superior product. The similar product absorbed water more easily and was more difficult to dry out."

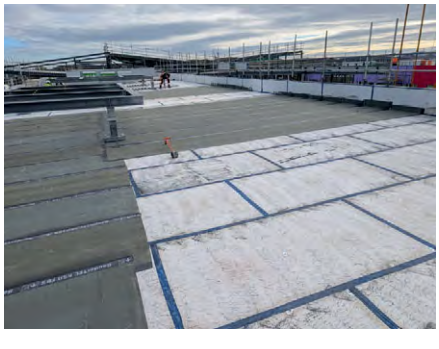
Caledonia High School is being built on the Fleet Grounds in Rosyth as a state-of-the-art replacement for the outdated Inverkeithing High School. It will accommodate 1,735 pupils over three floors, with an open "see and be seen" approach throughout.

The latest in Fife Council's £88m programme to renew all of its secondary schools, its Passivhaus build ensures Caledonia High School will use around 75% less energy than a standard UK new-build, helping to meet the education authority's net zero carbon ambitions.

The details for Caledonia High School were also used by AHR at Templehall Community Hub, also a Passivhaus project, in Kirkcaldy, Fife. Both projects are due to open around July 2026.

Keith said of the two: "The Magply board was selected as it is A1 rated and dimensionally stable so was a good product for substrate to the roofing system."

The Magply boards were supplied to Caledonia High School by CCF in East Kilbride.



Magply

www.magply.co.uk

JT13

magply.co.uk | 01621 776252 | sales@magply.co.uk

the role of fire doors in enhancing building *safety*

Fire doors are one of the most critical elements in any building's fire protection strategy. In 2023 alone, the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK responded to over 13,000 building fires, a reminder of the important role fire doors play in reducing the spread of fire until firefighters arrive. ***Steve Goodburn****, Business Development Director at Pyroguard, discusses how every component within a fire door system works together and why compliance relies on treating the fire door as a complete system...*

More than just a door leaf

A fire door should never be defined by the door leaf alone. Frames, intumescent seals, glazing systems and hardware all work together as part of an integrated system designed to perform under fire conditions. If one component is incompatible, incorrectly installed or substituted for a non-fire-rated alternative, the entire fire door system is liable to fail.

The door itself provides the primary barrier against flames and heat, but it must be installed into a compatible frame with precise tolerances to avoid excessive gaps. Many modern fire doors also incorporate glazed apertures, not only to allow natural light and visibility but also to enable the assessment of the fire conditions on the other side of the door.

Glass in fire doors must be fire-rated and installed during the manufacturing process as part of an approved fire door system. Fire safety glass varies in its protection levels, from simple integrity (E) to advanced solutions that reduce radiant heat transfer (EW) or even provide full insulation (EI). Furthermore, the glass panes often serve multiple design and compliance demands. For example, Pyroguard Advance offers up to 89% light transmission,

Continued on page 32...

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high UV stability and EW classification with fire resistance of 30 to 60 minutes. Considering the UK's average fire service response time of around nine minutes, this timeframe should allow sufficient time for the fire to be reported and for emergency services to arrive and tackle the blaze.

Fire safety glass also requires compatible intumescent glazing seals and sealants to hold it securely in place under extreme heat, prevent slumping and reduce heat transfer to the surrounding timber. When exposed to fire, these seals expand to close gaps, block flames and restrict smoke and hot gases from passing. The seals are also fitted in grooves along the edges of the door leaf or frame. Without these seals, the glass can shatter prematurely or the beads can ignite, allowing fire to pass through the door.

Like every other element of a fire door, compliance relies on treating the components as part of a tested and certified system. Any modification, such as installing a letterbox or changing hardware, can compromise the integrity of the door set and risk non-compliance, unless the entire system has been re-tested and certified.

A part of the bigger picture

Building Regulations' Approved Document B requires that buildings be divided into a number of compartments. This subdivision is designed to prevent the spread of fire from one compartment to another, allowing occupants time to escape and reducing the likelihood of large-scale incidents. In addition to minimising damage and providing more time for evacuation, compartmentation also helps to protect designated 'means of escape,' such as stairwells and service shafts, from smoke and fire.

An essential component of effective compartmentation is the correct specification and installation of fire doors, including any fire safety glass they contain. Problems can occur when compartmentation is breached, for example, if fire doors do not perform together as a system. This system-based approach is becoming even more critical with upcoming regulatory changes.

From September 2029, fire doors tested to British Standard BS 476-22 will no longer comply with UK Building Regulations. Instead, compliance must be demonstrated under the European classification system EN 13501-2. These European testing standards require different testing protocols and approaches to assessing the performance of fire protection systems.

In light of these changes, the industry needs to start preparing for the transition to European fire door testing standards now. Whether through re-testing existing products or specifying fully certified solutions that already meet European classifications, early action will minimise disruption and ensure compliance well ahead of 2029.

Vision 7 Thermal Commercial Door achieves new enhanced security test standard

Reynaers' Vision 7 Thermal Commercial Entrance Door has successfully passed Security Technical Standard (STS) to Burglary Resistance levels 1 and 2 (BR1 and BR2) for use in commercial projects requiring enhanced security. As the only UK product to achieve both STS202 BR2 and one million successful test cycles, Vision 7 offers a leading solution for projects, such as city-based commercial buildings that often demand more robust security standards.

Both the Vision 7 single and double leaf, double action swing doors have been successfully tested for resistance against physical force of the glass and metal panels. By achieving the STS202 BR2 standard, Vision 7 is eligible for specification across a range of projects including schools, offices, hospitals and government buildings, as the standard ensures a security level capable of withstanding targeted impact and force. STS202 certification is now specified as a requirement in many commercial projects.

Ian Osborne, Reynaers UK Product Development Manager, said: "Like all Reynaers products, launch is just the start of the product lifecycle. Achieving the STS202 BR1 and BR2 marks the latest milestone for Vision 7 which will see further development throughout 2026 and beyond."

www.reynaers.co.uk

FIREFLY® Phoenix continues to protect Home Bargains chain

As value for money makes the Home Bargains brand an increasingly popular choice with price conscious shoppers, the national retailer is continuing to increase its coverage by building new stores in locations such as Camborne in Cornwall, with products from the **FIREFLY** range repeatedly being included in the specification to help ensure the safety of staff and customers.

As with many of its outlets, the existing 9,150ft² warehouse and sales floor on the Camborne Retail Park is being refurbished by Oakhurst (Southport). with WPL Consulting filling the role of project architect. The Phoenix Vertical, Collaroll and ancillary FIREFLY products have been used to create a semi-permanent fire barrier that is suspended from the underside of the pitched, metal decked roof. Installation of the 60-minute rated fire curtain and smoke barrier was carried out by sub-contractor S R Shopfitting.

Working from hydraulic platforms, the lightweight Phoenix fire barrier was fixed to sections of steel angle bolted onto the roof members, with all overlaps sealed using FIREFLY High Temperature Adhesive, while butt joints were fixed using stainless steel staples. While the Collaroll was used to wrap the high-level steel beams, the manufacturer's ablative batts – introduced into the range last year to assist with tasks like creating protected zones – fill voids beneath the soffit level.

The Site Manager for Oakhurst, Kerry Humphreys, commented: "Along with a number of S R Shopfitting's operatives, I have been on the FIREFLY training course at its Rochdale premises and consider the systems to be far easier to install than the previous solution, which involved installing quite bulky sections of rock mineral wool which, even for those not directly involved with the work, tended to make you itch quite badly. The Phoenix and other products, by contrast are light to handle and easy to fix. It's a brilliant system."

"In respect of the Home Bargains stores we've been involved on, the fire requirements vary slightly between England and Scotland, where the regulation is for a full fire and smoke barrier and we know

FIREFLY will provide any special details we need for new jobs. With the barrier now installed by SR Shopfitting, the internal construction will continue so that the Phoenix terminates on top of the ceiling structure."

Manufactured from woven and non-woven glass, the FIREFLY range is designed to optimise resistance to flame and smoke as well as offer heat protection in a wide range of scenarios. The barriers are easy to install horizontally or vertically using a full selection of FIREFLY ancillary products to ensure a fully tested and certified installed system.

info@tba-pt.com
www.tbafirefly.com

Understanding Fire Safety in Social Housing

Fire safety is a vital part of electrical work, especially in social housing, where electricians play a key role in protecting lives and ensuring compliance. With tighter regulations and higher expectations, a strong understanding of fire detection standards and current best practices is essential.

A higher standard of responsibility

Social housing spans a wide range of property types, from older post-war flats to new builds. Many residents are more vulnerable due to age, health, or mobility, making effective fire protection critical. Ageing electrical systems, shared spaces, and inconsistent maintenance all increase risks. Meeting the legal minimum is not enough. Alarm grade, placement, and reliable interlinking can be the difference between compliance and full fire protection.

Regulations and standards

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 require smoke alarms on every storey, carbon monoxide alarms near fixed combustion appliances (excluding cookers), and prompt repair or replacement of faulty units.

The key British Standard for domestic fire detection systems (BS 5839-6:2019 +A1:2020) recommends Grade D1, Category LD2 mains-powered alarms with tamper-proof backup batteries, interlinked smoke alarms in escape routes and living areas, and heat alarms in kitchens.

Professional practice

Electricians must tailor each system to the property, select suitable alarms, ensure correct siting and interconnection, and keep thorough documentation for compliance and accountability.

Smart technology and ongoing support

Connected fire systems now enable remote monitoring of alarm status and faults, reducing maintenance visits and improving safety. Electricians who understand these technologies add real value. Supporting landlords and residents with advice on testing, maintenance, and operation ensures long-term reliability.

Raising standards

By following BS 5839-6, embracing new technologies, and prioritising safety over minimum compliance, electricians can help deliver safer homes across the social housing sector.

Find out how **Aico's** innovative technology provides everything you need to ensure compliance when carrying out works in social housing: ***www.aico.co.uk***

building in sustainability from the start: turning regulation into *value*

The era of sustainability being either a design aspiration or an optional extra has passed. With tightening regulations, escalating energy costs and the race to net zero, sustainability has become a fundamental design parameter. But more importantly than that, it's becoming a determining factor in ensuring enhanced financial outcomes for both new build and retrofit. ***Anna Maclean****, CEO and co-founder of SRE tells ABC&D more...*

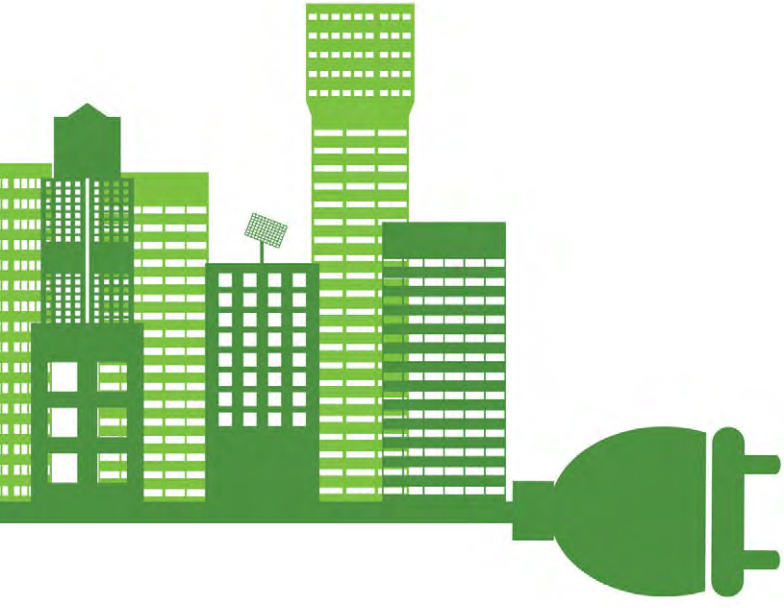
It would be fair to say that historically, sustainability has been treated as a compliance box ticking exercise at the end stages of a building's design. However, this had led to both inflated costs and assets that simply don't perform as well as they could. The truth is, the earlier sustainability is embedded into a project, the greater the benefits – not just in carbon and energy performance, but in cost certainty and market value.

Early integration – reducing risk and unlocking value

One enduring myth is that sustainability adds cost. In reality, early-stage sustainability integration is one of the most powerful tools for cost control, risk management and value enhancement.

A design team's influence over a building's energy and carbon outcomes is greatest during RIBA Stages 1 and 2, which cover the early stages of a project when the brief is developed, key requirements are defined, and the overall concept design is established. Early collaboration allows architects and sustainability consultants to shape orientation, form, materials and systems before they are fixed. This early leverage far outweighs what can be achieved through late-stage specification changes or retrofit.

Early integration also future-proofs projects against fast-evolving regulation. The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) will continue to tighten, and the forthcoming finalised version of the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard (UKNZCBS) will formalise expectations for net-zero performance.



Projects that anticipate these changes stay compliant for longer, protecting both value and reputation.

At Bourn Quarter in Cambridge, this proactive approach paid off. The design team set out to create a low-energy, climate-resilient industrial campus, aligning from the outset with RIBA, LETI and UKNZCBS benchmarks. Early input from the team at SRE enabled a 16% improvement in upfront carbon performance against the UKNZCBS 2025 target, saving around 2,770 tonnes of CO_2e compared to a business-as-usual approach. These decisions, made at concept stage, avoided later redesigns and delivered measurable long-term gains.

Embedding energy efficiency in design and delivery

From day one, SRE sustainability specialists applied the energy hierarchy for ensuring effective energy performance and 20 years later it's still as important as it was then: design lean, make systems clean and then use technology to be green. In other words, optimise your building fabric before sizing renewables or complex HVAC systems.

A robust building envelope with effective insulation, high levels of airtightness, high performance glazing and thoughtfully designed shading, can dramatically cut heating and cooling loads. Tools like Dynamic Simulation Modelling (DSM) and TM54 Operational Energy Modelling enable design teams to test and compare options early, ensuring designs are both compliant and realistic in operation.

Passive and bioclimatic design principles remain central to sustainable architecture. Thoughtful orientation, natural ventilation strategies and effective daylighting don't just reduce energy demand; they enhance user wellbeing.

Closing the performance gap through lifecycle thinking

The performance gap – the difference between predicted and actual energy use – remains one of the biggest challenges. Bridging that gap requires whole team collaboration – with the contractor included – and continual onsite monitoring.

Digital monitoring tools are also helping. Live energy monitoring and smart metering let building operators and occupiers spot inefficiencies in real time. These insights support cost reduction and help organisations meet their carbon reporting obligations – reducing both Scope 1 and Scope 3 emissions.

Whole Life Carbon

Whole Life Carbon Assessments (WLCA) quantify both embodied carbon (emissions from materials, manufacturing and construction) and operational carbon (emissions from use and maintenance). This allows a design team to make informed decisions that minimise total environmental impact rather than just operational impact.

And, as the grid becomes greener, the relative importance of embodied carbon over operational carbon will increase. So again, designing out as much carbon as possible in the early stages is imperative in reducing the overall carbon footprint of a building.

From compliance to value creation

The industry is going through a fundamental shift, from viewing sustainability as a regulatory hurdle to recognising it as a driver of innovation and value creation. Architects and design teams embracing early integration and whole lifecycle monitoring are creating buildings that quite simply perform better and cost less to run. At its core, sustainability is about intelligent design – using evidence and collaboration to deliver buildings that are efficient and genuinely fit for the future. Embed these principles from the start, and we can move beyond compliance to design buildings that actively contribute to a net-zero built environment and yield stronger financial outcomes.

Anna Maclean

JT222

Energy efficiency boost for Edwardian house retrofit

ISO-Chemie's thermal insulating and load bearing bracket support system has been specified to provide energy efficiency improvements to an Edwardian property in Oxfordshire. The move sees WINFRAMER units retrofitted as part of an initiative to bring the poorly insulated solid walled house built in 1909 in Oxford, up to current energy efficiency standards, providing better quality accommodation for the homeowner along with long-term cost savings.

Passivhaus certified and fire rated to up to 30 minutes, WINFRAMER is a prefabricated installation frame, manufactured to accommodate cavities up to 250mm that allows windows to be supported independently from the face of the wall regardless of any external cladding being in place.

Quick and easy to install, the product's application in Oxford is seen as part of a solution to meet a wider Government strategy to reduce carbon levels in housing that has single skin walls or non-cavity walls – these buildings have a reputation for leaking considerable amounts of energy, heat and sound.

Nikki Lambert of Lambert Home Builds, said: "Using the WINFRAMER system is a game changer for us as the existing windows are being replaced with new high performance triple glazing. They are then moved into the external wall insulation system, where it's integral to have a secure fixing system as well as a means to mitigate thermal bridging."

www.iso-chemie.eu/en-GB/home

JT223

Sustainable refrigeration solution for Aerospace project

An Aerospace company sought a solution for a project which required some products to be stored at -25°C, with a prechill cold store temperature of 2°C. The company was looking for an environmentally friendly solution. Refrigeration specialist installer, Green Cooling designed and specified eight **Panasonic** cold chain refrigeration condensing units due to their reliability, precise temperature control and use of the more natural refrigerant, R744 (CO2), which has a GWP of 1, making the units the idea choice for this project.

The eight Panasonic units, six of which are 10HP and two are 4HP, are highly efficient due to their low energy consumption compared to other products currently on the market. They are suitable for both refrigerated and freezer cold rooms, providing a comprehensive solution for all commercial refrigeration needs. Specifically developed for small to medium capacity applications, these units can function in outdoor temperatures as low as -20°C, ensuring consistent performance even in challenging conditions.

The innovative two-stage rotary compressor and split-cycle technology of the units optimise the refrigeration cycle, leading to a significant reduction in energy consumption compared to traditional HFC systems. This translates to lower operating costs, plus provides a high Coefficient of Performance (COP), at high ambient temperatures.

www.aircon.panasonic.eu

JT18

Marmox Thermoblocks insulate Tudor reconstruction

The reconstruction of a rambling old farmyard close to Ely in East Cambridgeshire is making use of well proven **Marmox** Thermoblocks, specified in three widths as the ideal solution for tackling thermal-bridging around the building perimeter as part of a well-insulated design.

Mitchell's Barn is replacing a sprawling complex of dilapidated tin cowsheds and a rather more attractive oak barn which was founded on a plinth of Tudor era bricks. The original planning permission allowed for the reconstruction of the latter structure, but when the owner, Ben Hughes came to dismantle the outer envelope, much of the timber was found to be rotten while the bricks showed significant frost-damage. The work which got underway earlier in the autumn, is therefore seeing both 215 and 140mm wide Thermoblocks being used to support a 800mm high brick base which will then carry the conserved oak beams, creating a traditional looking inner ambience.

Ben Hughes commented: "In order to meet Building Regulations, we have gone for an insulated cavity wall with 150m of PIR insulation for the floor and roof, but when I was researching how to address the issue of thermal bridging at the floor wall junction, Marmox Thermoblock seemed to be the only targeted product solution. In terms of the loadings and the insulation values I am certain it will work well. It's a good mix of old and new technologies and I'm very happy with the design overall."

In total Ben and his bricklayer have used 144 x 140x65mm blocks plus 18 x 100x65mm blocks and 50 x 215x65mm blocks, purchased from Insulation Shop on-line. Bedded in conventional mortar, the stepped overlaps between adjacent Thermoblocks have been secured using a high performance (Sika) adhesive.

Ben concluded saying: "The work is progressing well and my bricklayer, Danny, has had no issues with laying the Thermoblocks or cutting them where it has been necessary. Some of the packages, such as for the windows, are still to be placed, but I am confident of the finished property exceeding the current Building Regulation requirements and making a very comfortable home."

He is also consulting with Marmox's technical department over the use of the company's even longer established Multiboard thermal tilebacker board and other products for fitting out the bathrooms, including at least one wetroom.

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www.marmox.co.uk

FP McCann and SolarTyle Forge a Powerful Alliance to Redefine Sustainable Roofing in the UK

In a landmark move set to reshape the future of residential construction, precast concrete giant FP McCann has announced a strategic partnership with SolarTyle, a pioneer in integrated solar roof tile technology. This collaboration will deliver the UK's first efficient and cost-effective solar roof, seamlessly integrating SolarTyle's innovative system with FP McCann's renowned Thin Flat and Thin Flat Duo concrete roof tiles.

The partnership arrives at a pivotal moment for the UK housing market, with the government's Future Homes Standard set to mandate solar panels on most new homes from 2027. This forward-thinking alliance places FP McCann and SolarTyle at the forefront of this transition, offering developers a streamlined, aesthetically superior, high-performance solution to meet and exceed these new sustainability requirements.

For years, homeowners and developers have had to compromise between the proven durability of traditional roofing materials and the environmental benefits of often-obtrusive solar panels. The FP McCann and SolarTyle partnership eliminates this compromise. The system integrates directly with standard roof battens, allowing rapid installation with the same simplicity as a conventional tiled roof. The result is a seamless, weather-tight, visually stunning roof that generates clean energy without sacrificing architectural integrity.

"This partnership is about more than just a new product; it's about reimagining the roof itself," says Jonathan Pratt for FP McCann. "We combine our 70 years of expertise in producing high-quality, durable roofing materials with SolarTyle's cutting-edge solar technology. The result is a roof that is not only built to last but also built to power the future."

Available in various colours, including Anthracite and Red, the SolarTyle system is designed to match FP McCann's existing tile range perfectly, ensuring a flawless finish for any property, from modern urban developments to traditional rural homes. This attention to aesthetic detail and the system's high-yield energy output set a new standard for building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV) in the UK.

Beyond the visual appeal, the partnership delivers tangible benefits for developers. The system is MCS-certified and backed by a 15-year warranty, providing long-term peace of mind.

It simplifies the procurement process by offering a single-source solution for both roofing and solar, and it significantly elevates the sustainability credentials of any new development, a key selling point in today's environmentally conscious market.

Anthony Crespi, Co-Founder and Director at SolarTyle adds: "For the first time, an integrated solar tile system can compete on price with the UK's leading in-roof PV solutions. Our technology utilises more roof area, maximising energy generation and providing greater design flexibility. We are thrilled to partner with a trusted name like FP McCann to bring this game-changing solution to a nationwide audience."

As the UK construction industry prepares for a greener future, the collaboration between FP McCann and SolarTyle is a beacon of innovation. By delivering a solution that is at once practical, affordable, and beautiful, they are not just building roofs; they are building the sustainable homes of tomorrow.

For more information about the integrated solar roof tile system, please visit ***https://fpmccann.co.uk/portfolio-items/solar-roof-tile/***

Contact: ***roofing@fpmccann.co.uk*** or call Jonathan Pratt on ***07740 433 860***

Image: The Modern House

from the ground up:
why early collaboration on a polished concrete floor matters

In every project, there's one surface that gently carries the weight of everything else: the floor. And when that floor is polished concrete, its success depends on more than just the final seal. The best outcomes happen long before the pour, through early collaboration between architect, contractor, and specialist. ***Woody's Concrete Company*** *explains...*

Why it matters from the start

Polished concrete sits at the intersection of architecture, structure, and craft. It's both substrate and finish, meaning that early design decisions directly influence how successful the result will be. Too often, specialists are approached once the floor slab is already poured. At that point, key opportunities have been lost, from correct depth allowance, integration of movement joints, control of aggregate exposure, curing conditions, or surface flatness. These are not aesthetic extras; they're what determine whether a floor performs beautifully for decades or cracks, curls, or discolours within months.

Early collaboration allows the design team to embed the floor's needs into the wider construction plan. We can advise on mix design (cement type, aggregate, colour, and admixtures), slab specification, curing regimes, bay sizing, and environmental conditions to ensure the concrete is ready to polish, not fight against it.

Architectural intent meets technical execution

Architects often choose polished concrete for its refined simplicity. The way light plays across the surface, the visual continuity, and the sense of permanence. But, look closer, and this seemingly visual calm on the surface relies on immense technical precision in the layers below.

Flatness tolerances, bay layout, edge details, and even underfloor heating design all shape the finished look. When the architect, structural engineer, and polished concrete specialist work together early, every detail, from joint layout to service penetrations, can be coordinated before it's cast in stone (or rather, concrete).

At Woody's we frequently collaborate with practices that now treat polished concrete as a material finish in its own right, rather than as a screed or covering, which continues to cause great confusion for many newcomers to the material. By planning with the architect, we can align on the interior palette and create thresholds that integrate perfectly with adjoining materials such as timber or stone.

Reduce the risk and protect your budget

On-site, polished concrete rewards precision and punishes assumption. Miscommunication about slab specification, curing times or pour sequence can cause delays and defects that are costly to rectify.

By contrast, when specialists are part of the early design phase, those risks are heavily mitigated. We can flag sequencing issues (for instance, if joinery or glazing works are programmed too soon, or too late), ensure proper moisture control, and specify the correct joint sealants and protection layers to prevent surface contamination during the all-important curing phase.

Early input also clarifies where the structural concrete ends and the decorative system begins. That understanding avoids duplication, wasted materials, and unnecessary cost. For developers and contractors, this means tighter programmes, clearer responsibilities, and a finish that genuinely lasts.

Sustainability and lifecycle performance

Polished concrete floors naturally lend themselves to low-carbon and long-life design. They use the existing structural slab as the final finish, eliminating additional coverings, adhesives, and VOC-heavy sealants.

When designed with longevity in mind, correct mix, curing, and protection, a polished concrete floor can last the lifetime of the building with only light maintenance. It also supports thermal mass strategies, absorbing heat during the day and releasing it at night, reducing reliance on mechanical systems. Working closely with architects allows us to optimise these benefits, choosing locally sourced aggregates, refining mix proportions, and specifying sealers with low environmental impact.

Precision, precision, precision

A polished concrete floor isn't just cast and polished; it's layered through time, skill, and dialogue. Every detail, from pour planning to curing environment, grinding sequence, and sealing, demands skilled foresight. The earlier the conversation begins, the more control we all have over the result.

Building what lasts

Ultimately, successful polished concrete floors are the product of partnership. Architects define the vision; contractors coordinate the structure; specialists like us bring the technical understanding that turns that vision into reality.

When those three perspectives align early, the result is a surface that does more than support a space; it defines it.

JT225

Improving the standard of flooring in social homes

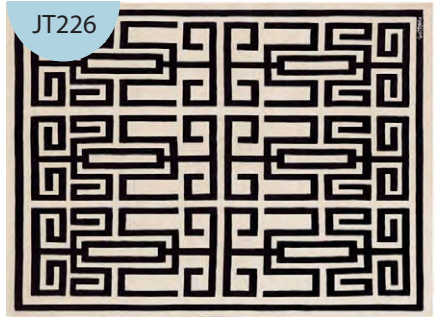
The positive impacts of providing social tenants with good quality flooring throughout their accommodation are well-documented. Along with other furnishings, flooring can help to create a 'sense of home', improving well-being, boosting integration and reducing loneliness, lessening financial strain and giving a sense of pride. Social housing providers also benefit, reductions in void rent loss, reduced void turnover and costs, reduced refusal rates and fewer complaints have all been cited as benefits of providing floor coverings. **Beauflor's** cushion vinyl flooring ranges provide landlords with an affordable and durable floor covering that's still quiet and comfortable underfoot. Natural or grey wood planks, light stone or dark slate, concrete, terrazzo or ceramic tiles, the designs capture popular domestic styles and have excellent thermal and acoustic properties.

Get ready to be Impressed

JT227

Unilin Flooring's Quick-Step has revamped its Impressive waterproof laminate collection, introducing eight new colours to join existing best-selling patterns. The new Smooth structure presents an elegant grain and fine wood pores with a refined bevel. In colours of Ivory Oak, Bourbon Oak, Dune Oak and Smoked Oak; it brings an elegance that feels assured and poised. Contrasting this clean look comes the new Rich structure. As its name suggests, this feels more vibrant and alive with spirited knots adding depth of character to its Cotton, Almond Oak, Truffle Oak and Rye Oak colours. While distinct in their look, these new textures and colours do share one thing in common: each is available with an extraordinary 20 planks per design. By increasing the number of unique planks available, Quick-Step has made sure these additions look even more natural and take another step closer to nature.

JT226



Amini rugs: a dialogue between lines and contrasts

In this selection of **Amini** rugs – from the Design Icons, Contemporary and Tribal catalogues – strict lines and geometries take shape, giving way to an intense dialogue between black and white. From the architectural strokes of Labirinto by Gio Ponti to the spontaneous weaves of Nomadic and Nomadic Breeze by Amini Studio; from the orderly grids of RD Grid Berber by Rodolfo Dordoni to the graphic compositions of Collective by Carlotta Fortuna, and finally to the dynamic geometric patterns of Campiture by Elisa Ossino. In these exquisitely crafted pieces, a shared language emerges – one grounded in balance and proportion – that goes beyond mere decoration.

JT228

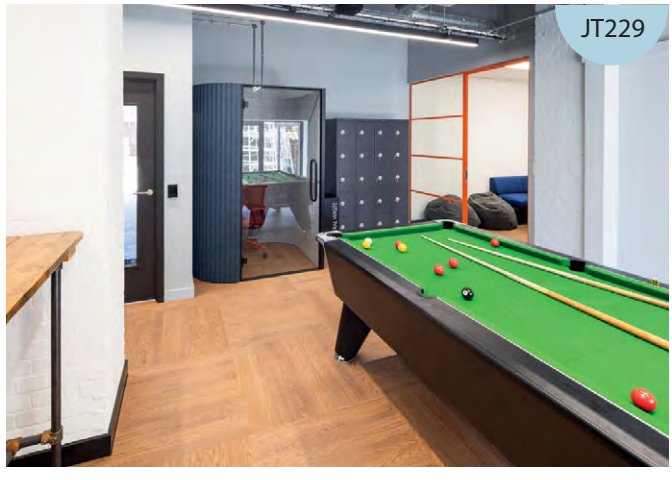
Junckers expands CPD library

Wood flooring company **Junckers** has added new RIBA-approved seminars to its CPD library. Selecting Solid Wood Floors for Heritage and Retrofit Buildings, Specifying Sustainable Flooring and Selecting and Specifying the Correct Hardwood Floor cover the RIBA Core Curriculum areas of Building Conservation and Heritage, Sustainable Architecture, and Design, Construction & Technology. Each seminar lasts 35-55 minutes and are now available for bookings in 2026. Presented by Junckers' experienced technical and specification managers, the seminars can be held at the architectural practice's premises or at Junckers' London showroom.

Live webinars are also available. Areas covered: UK-wide.

www.junckers.co.uk

JT229



Design the key for vibrant new office space

When ABM Alliance looked to refurbish a former ambulance station into its new Bristol city centre offices, it tasked Kerr Office Group with the job. With the aim of creating a bold and inspiring space, Kerr Office Group specified **Forbo Flooring Systems'** Allura Flex Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) flooring and Tessera Accord carpet tiles.

Angela Tedder, Senior Technical Designer at Kerr Office Group, said: "We looked to Forbo for both functional and design reasons. The Tessera Accord carpet tiles helped create a neutral backdrop for the wider working spaces, with the 'Magic Carpet' colourway complementing the different tones we used in those areas. With 24 dB impact sound reduction, Tessera Accord is ideal for offices, helping to reduce impact sound and offer a comfortable underfoot feeling.

www.forbo.com

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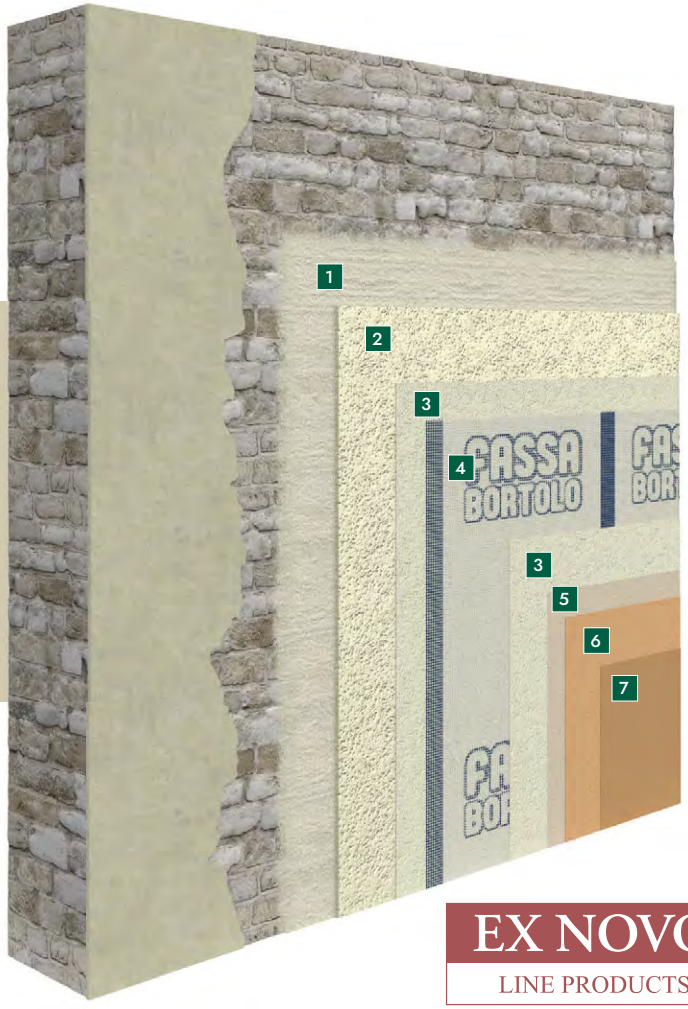

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4 **FASSANET 160** Reinforcing mesh

PRIMER AND DECORATIVE COAT

5 **FS 412** Primer

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7 **SKIN 432** Siloxane-enhanced finish

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FASSANET 160

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Visit **www.fassabortolo.co.uk**
or call **01684 218 305**

JT20

FASSA BORTOLO

JT230

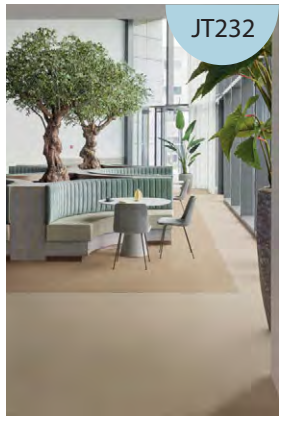
Unlock the ultimate in heavy duty performance

When it comes to responding to the challenges of high-traffic areas, **IVC Commercial's** family premium heterogeneous vinyl floors are ready excel in both form and function. With Isafe 70, Iperform 70, Pionieer 70 and a recently updated Optimise 70, IVC Commercial has a complete range of heavy-duty floors for all types of location. Isafe 70 brings stylish slip-resistance thanks to its easy to look after Hypergrip finish that brings TRRL 36+ slip restraint. Making commercial spaces quieter with 19dB of impact noise reduction, Optimise 70 acoustic sheet vinyl is made for heavy duty use. Thanks to its Performance Barrier layer that brings strength and stability as well as lasting appearance retention, and its 0.70mm wear layer, Iperform 70 achieves the highest possible classification for vinyl floors; and providing 18dB of impact sound reduction in heavy duty environments, Pionieer 70 is the new acoustic flooring solution from IVC Commercial.

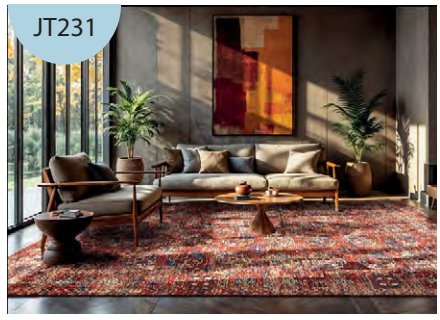
Design, sustainability and performance: Forbo streamlines Marmoleum Modular offering

Forbo Flooring Systems' Marmoleum Modular collection of planks and tiles has seen an extensive palette refresh, with a focus on neutral shades and warm hues, all aimed at modern commercial design schemes. Split into Linear, Neutral and Accent, the new Marmoleum Modular range contains 30 designs in total. The Linear sub-collection features organic linear designs that are reminiscent of wood tones; within Neutral, the designs have a marbled effect that meets the stone and material trends seen on the market; Accent is a more eye-catching, with the neutral yellow of 'Corn Silk' and pale green of 'Fresh Thyme' adding a contemporary pop of colour to any space.

JT232



JT231



Reimagining Tradition

Louis De Poortere has introduced four new designs into Antiquarian, one of the most popular collections in its 100% recyclable Ecorugs. Antiquarian is a collection of Ecorugs designs inspired by the rich and long heritage of rug and textile craftsmanship. With styles rooted in cultural significance and the artistry and regionality of traditional weaving, it is an eclectic array of designs that's now welcoming in four new patterns. Suzani, Tabriz, Antalia and Kasak are all available in a range of colourways and six standard Ecorugs sizes. All designs are made from 40% recycled polyester and can be fully recycled through the Belgian weaver's simple to use free Take Care programme.

JT233

Nyra: the collection of surfaces designed by Alberto Apostoli for Atlas Concorde inspired by Wellness Architecture

Nyra is a comprehensive collection that draws inspiration from stone – from its tactile presence, the visual diversity enriched with mineral inclusions and diffuse veining, and the iridescent effects revealed when light strikes the material. In this collection, designed by **Alberto Apostoli** for Atlas Concorde, stone is only the starting point. The surfaces also reference other materials – such as cork and textiles – reinterpreted in their most essential characteristics and expressed through a new visual language.

The result of this aesthetic research is a palette of unique shades and textures that evoke ancestral sensations of 'already lived' perceptions – familiar and reassuring – contributing to the creation of multisensory environments where visual, tactile, and emotional interactions merge into a holistic experience of wellbeing that permeates and defines the designed space.

Designed for hospitality, contract, and residential sectors, Nyra can be used both indoors and outdoors – for wall and floor coverings, furniture customisation, and countertops, as well as for the creation of 3D structures, decorative elements, and mosaics.

The collection is available in seven colourways – Star, Hay, Sunlight, Mist, Meteor, Charcoal, and Ambrosia – spanning full, deep, and luminous shades of white, cream, grey, and black, to visually rich conglomerates featuring material inclusions of varying sizes that provide new chromatic depth and realism.

3D Saddle and 3D Qube are the two three-dimensional proposals: the former featuring horizontal grooves, the latter a geometric texture of small, evenly sized squares enhanced with perpendicular and parallel graphic lines. Designed for wall cladding, both recall the artisanal heritage of stoneworking and play with the chiaroscuro effects generated by the 3D relief, resulting in dynamic, theatrically inspired settings.

Finally, Favus and Opus are Nyra's two mosaic interpretations. The latter recalls the ancient Roman building technique characterised by a pattern of small square blocks set at a 45° angle, while the former draws inspiration from the hexagonal cells of honeycomb structures. **https://albertoapostoli.com**

fermacell® fibre gypsum boards:

Accelerating timelines without compromise

In the fast-paced world of construction, time is often the most valuable resource. Delays can cascade through a project, impacting budgets, client satisfaction, and downstream trades. That's why innovative materials like fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are transforming how architects approach internal wall construction, offering a smarter, faster alternative to traditional blockwork and plasterboard systems without sacrificing strength or performance.

One of the most compelling advantages of fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are their installation flexibility. Unlike blockwork, which typically requires the building envelope to be sealed before internal walls can be constructed, fermacell® fibre gypsum boards can be installed before the envelope is closed. This shift in sequencing has a profound impact on programme time. By enabling earlier commencement of internal works, fermacell® helps compress the overall schedule, allowing multiple trades to work in parallel and reducing idle time on site.

Speed is another critical factor. fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are quicker to install than blockwork, thanks to its dry construction method and ease of handling. There's no need for wet trades, curing times, or complex logistics around mortar and mixing. Installers can move swiftly, and the boards can be cut and fixed with standard tools, streamlining the process even further. For architects working on tight deadlines or fast-track projects, this speed translates directly into time saved and milestones met.

When compared with traditional plasterboard systems its reduction in layers including pattress and small component lists offer a time reduction.

Yet speed alone isn't enough – performance matters. fermacell® fibre gypsum boards deliver the strength and durability of blockwork, making them suitable for high-impact areas, crowd loading applications and demanding environments. Its dense composition provides excellent acoustic insulation, fire resistance, and robustness, meeting the rigorous standards architects expect from traditional masonry. This means you don't have to compromise on quality to gain time.

Another often-overlooked benefit is the reduction in enabling works. Blockwork typically requires foundations, lintels, and other structural supports, adding complexity and cost. fermacell® fibre gypsum boards, by contrast, offer a lightweight system that can be installed without these additional elements. This not only simplifies design and coordination but also reduces material usage and site disruption, contributing to a more sustainable and efficient build.

From a design perspective, fermacell® fibre gypsum boards offer versatility. They support direct finishes such as paint, tiles, or wallpaper, and can be used in curved or complex layouts that would be challenging with blockwork. This opens up creative possibilities while maintaining practical advantages.

In summary, fermacell® fibre gypsum boards are more than just a building material, they are a strategic tool for architects looking to accelerate project delivery without compromising on performance or design integrity. By enabling earlier installation, reducing enabling works, and offering the strength of blockwork with the speed of drywall, fermacell® helps architects stay ahead of schedule and deliver smarter, more efficient buildings.

For practices focused on innovation, sustainability, and time-sensitive delivery, fermacell® fibre gypsum is a material worth specifying. It's not just about building faster – it's about building better.

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JT22

Restoring tradition, preserving the future – with Ex Novo from Fassa Bortolo

Fassa Bortolo's FassaLime Cycle 4B is the embodiment of craftsmanship meeting conservation – a restoration system designed to respect history while ensuring lasting performance. At the heart of this system lies the Ex Novo range, a collection of products developed specifically for the repair and restoration of historic buildings, providing technical integrity without compromising architectural authenticity.

The Ex Novo line has been formulated using natural hydraulic lime binders, ensuring high breathability, flexibility, and compatibility with traditional substrates. These properties are essential when working on heritage structures, where modern cement-based materials can cause damage by trapping moisture or altering the original fabric. Ex Novo products replicate the look and performance of original lime mortars and plasters, offering restorers a sustainable, authentic solution that stands the test of time.

Within the FassaLime Cycle 4B system, Ex Novo mortars, base coats, and finishes work in harmony to repair damaged masonry, consolidate historic walls, and recreate period surfaces with precision. Each layer is carefully calibrated to promote natural vapour exchange, reduce salt migration and prevent cracking – preserving both the beauty and integrity of the building envelope.

Beyond performance, the Ex Novo range reflects Fassa Bortolo's deep respect for heritage architecture and traditional materials. Whether used on listed monuments, rural farmhouses, or urban façades, it allows architects, conservators, and applicators to restore with confidence, knowing the materials will perform in harmony with the original structure.

Combining centuries-old lime technology with modern manufacturing consistency, FassaLime Cycle 4B and Ex Novo reaffirm Fassa Bortolo's commitment to protecting our architectural heritage – naturally, sustainably, and beautifully.

To find out more on our FassaLime cycles and Ex Novo products, please call **01684 218305** or email **info.fassauk@fassabortolo.com**

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later life living – turning a corner for *investors?*

By 2072, almost 30% of Britons will be aged 65 or over. This stark demographic shift is already taking shape, with profound implications for the housing market. Despite an estimated shortfall of at least 4.3 million in the UK today, less than 1 million are specifically designed for later life living, and this figure excludes full-service care homes. The opportunity seems clear: provide quality housing for older generations, free up traditional family homes for younger buyers, and potentially ease price pressures across the market. ***Daniel Austin****, CEO and co-founder at ASK Partners tells ABC&D more...*

Despite the apparent benefits listed above, the later life living sector has struggled to gain traction. Unlike countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and the US, where dedicated retirement living regulations have unlocked significant investment, the UK lacks a clear legislative framework.

Currently, later living falls under the broad C2 planning classification, a catch-all category that lumps together nursing homes, boarding schools, and even detention centres. Crucially, it does not adequately cover retirement developments where no formal care is provided, highlighting a persistent policy vacuum. As a result, the focus has remained on end-of-life care homes rather than purpose-built communities for healthier, active retirees looking to downsize without sacrificing lifestyle.

Negative public perception has further dampened investor appetite. High service charges, often compounded by opaque exit fee structures payable on death, have left families unable to sell properties while charges continue to mount, eroding any inheritance left behind. Many buyers also struggle to understand complex legal arrangements underpinning these developments, with leaseholds and restrictions creating barriers to resale.

Continued on page 48...

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JT23

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JT234

For lenders, the lack of robust resale data and uncertain time-to-sale remain key concerns, making it difficult to structure financing confidently.

Nevertheless, the industry is slowly responding to these challenges. Some developers have introduced exit fees as a means to keep annual service charges lower, effectively spreading lifetime costs more evenly. Others are expanding rental options, allowing residents to 'pay as they go' rather than buying a niche asset they may later struggle to sell. However, these rental prices are typically high – a shock for many retirees unaccustomed to current market rents, having paid off their mortgages decades earlier. For the model to appeal widely, these schemes need to be restructured in ways that provide security of tenure while avoiding unsustainable rent inflation.

Meanwhile, changes to planning policy are removing some of the limited development advantages that previously existed. C2 classifications have historically provided exemptions from affordable housing contributions, supporting viability for specialist retirement schemes. The erosion of these benefits is making the economics of development less attractive. Combined with poor publicity, opaque legal models, and limited specialist financing options, developers have little incentive to enter or scale up in the sector.

There are, however, reasons for cautious optimism. Demographic pressures are forcing policy conversations to accelerate, and institutional investors are increasingly drawn to long-term demographic plays, particularly those with inflation-linked cashflows and strong ESG credentials. Countries like Australia and New Zealand have shown that when underpinned by clear regulation, transparent consumer protections, and viable financing models, later life living can thrive as a commercial sector while delivering significant societal benefits.

For the later living model to work in the UK, financing must adapt, backed by clearer data on resale performance, exit fees, and time to sale...

Daniel Austin

For the later living model to work in the UK, a fundamental shift is needed. Financing must adapt, backed by clearer data on resale performance, exit fees, and time to sale. Planning frameworks should recognise later life communities as distinct from both traditional housing and care homes, providing clarity and certainty for developers and investors alike. Consumer protections must be reformed to rebuild public trust, ensuring residents and their families are not left with unforeseen financial liabilities.

Without such structural changes, later life living risks remaining a missed opportunity: for investors seeking resilient long-term returns, for older generations in need of appropriate housing, and for a country urgently trying to unlock more family homes to ease its deepening housing crisis. With demographic realities becoming impossible to ignore, the sector stands at a turning point, if policymakers, investors, and developers are ready to act.

ENQUIRIES VISIT www.abcd-info.co.uk EMAIL korucirculation@c-cms.com POST use address card

Bridging design and accessibility with Stannah's stairlift at luxury Islay hotel

Ardbeg House, a boutique luxury hotel on the picturesque island of Islay, Scotland, has opened its doors as a truly immersive whisky and hospitality experience, with a newly installed **Stannah** Stairiser CR2 inclined platform lift providing guests with full accessibility to upper floors.

Featuring twelve individually themed bedrooms, the hotel combines luxury, creativity and storytelling inspired by the island's famous Ardbeg distillery and heritage.

The work

Designed in collaboration with Russell Sage Studio, Ardbeg House honours the heritage of Ardbeg while creating immersive spaces that reflect the island's culture and the distillery's iconic history. Over 20 local and Scottish architects contributed to weaving Ardbeg's story into the hotel's design, which also involved seamlessly integrating the Stannah Stairiser CR2 with customised solutions. Stannah Lifts collaborated closely with Russell Sage Studio and main contractor Thomas Johnstone to supply a custom lift solution that met both the functional and aesthetic requirements.

The challenge

The hotel required a custom solution to provide disabled access to its upper floors, which presented three main challenges. The first challenge was accessing the island, as transporting equipment involved careful planning and coordination with ferry services to ensure timely delivery and installation without disrupting the renovation schedule.

The second challenge was addressing the space constraints. The hotel had no space to accommodate a passenger lift, so an inclined platform lift was the best option. However, the staircase area was small, requiring a compact design. Following a detailed assessment of the space, a Stannah CR2 inclined platform lift was chosen as the ideal solution. The lift's slimline design further minimised wall projection, and the platform folds neatly when not in use, preserving staircase space. The platform dimensions of 800 by 1000mm comfortably accommodate a wheelchair and user, while raised ramps and safety barrier arms ensure secure and safe operation.

The goal was to provide safe and reliable access for wheelchair users without disrupting the visual appeal of the hotel interiors. To achieve this, a bespoke colour was selected for the platform lift, ensuring it blended seamlessly with the surrounding walls and décor.

The results

The Stairiser CR2 now provides safe and reliable access to the two upper floors of Ardbeg House, allowing all guests to enjoy the hotel's immersive and unique experience. Equipped with remote call stations, wheelchair users can summon the lift independently from the top or bottom of the stairs, ensuring convenient operation.

Designed for use on a curved rail, the Stairiser CR2 follows the natural flow of the staircase while keeping outward projection to a minimum. This innovative feature makes the Stairiser CR2 equally well suited for installations featuring a single turn, multiple landings or spiral configurations.

To ensure the stairlift complemented the hotel's rich Ardbeggian interiors, the rail and carriage were finished in a custom green paint specifically chosen to match the hotel's décor. This carefully considered design decision allowed the lift to feel like a natural part of the space, making the lift an integral element of the storytelling and design.

With the installation of the Stairiser CR2 completed in just two days, Ardbeg House continues to offer a world-class whisky and hospitality experience that is now fully accessible to every guest.

Dimitri De Juliis, Technical Sales Consultant at Stannah Lifts Scotland, said: "Working on Ardbeg House was an exciting challenge because it required a solution that improved access while seamlessly blending with the interiors. By customising the stairlift with a bespoke green finish, we were able to provide full accessibility without compromising the hotel's luxurious design. Careful logistical planning was also essential, as all equipment had to be transported to the island via ferry. It's incredibly rewarding to see how naturally the lift integrates into such a unique and immersive space."

For more information, visit:
www.stannahlifts.co.uk

Panoramahyttene among finalists for AHEAD Awards Europe 2025

Images: Ida K. Vollum

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Panoramahyttene, located in Norway's Haugesund region, has been shortlisted for the prestigious AHEAD Awards Europe 2025, celebrating the best in hospitality and design worldwide.

With annual ceremonies in Singapore, New York, Dubai and London, the AHEAD Awards celebrates the world's most inspiring hospitality design, and the creative teams behind it. As the only Norwegian finalist, Panoramahyttene brings international attention not just to the project itself, but to the entire Haugesund region.

"It feels almost surreal to see Panoramahyttene among the finalists for such a prestigious award. Looking at both this year's and past finalists, we're truly honoured to be in such a great company," said Tove V. Bråthen, Marketing and Operations Manager.

Recognized for their spectacular cabins by the sea

Nestled in the dramatic coastal landscape of Western Norway, Panoramahyttene stands out for its seamless blend of architecture and raw natural beauty. Here, the sky feels endless and the horizon stretches wide, with shifting light and weather adding a new layer to the experience.

Perched on the rocky edge above the sea, the cabins invite guests to experience nature up close, yet from a calm and comfortable space. Elevated placement provides an unbroken 180° panorama, with large windows on the front, sides and roof drawing the landscape into the interior.

Inside, dark tones frame the ever-changing light, turning nature itself into the artwork. No television is needed. Here, the 7.5m window offers an uninterrupted, real-time view of Norway's raw coastal drama.

Designed by HOLON arkitektur – inspired by nature

When designing the cabins, the architect looked to nature itself for guidance. Inspired by Ice Age boulders scattered across the terrain, he created cabins that seem carved by time; sculptural yet subtle, luxurious yet low-impact, fully in tune with the landscape around them.

Architect Roald Bø explained: "Our goal was to let the architecture follow the rhythm of the terrain. The cabins aren't placed in nature, they're part of it.

"The way the cabins are designed, with their longitudinal orientation towards the sea and large panoramic windows, provides a completely unique experience of the landscape."

https://www.aheadawards.com/

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